

Horror in Culture & Entertainment

DOOM MONTH



BACK TO SPOOK CENTRAL FOR THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF

GHOSTBUSTERS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR IVAN REITMAN

AND THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS, AND MORE!

151 OCT-NOV 2014 \$4.99 US \$5.99 CAN



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TROMA AFTERLIFE **THREE DECADES**
URNS 40 **WITH ARCHIE** **WITH C.H.U.D.**

CLIFF KUTNER KEOPS IT HOME

COMICS AND CIVILIZATION (HARD EDITIONS!)

AND REVISITED WITH DIRECTOR PABLO LARREA



JOE R. LANSDALE'S PRISONER 409
ONIBADA • THE BIRTHDAY MASSACRE
FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE SPACE MONSTER

16 DON'T GET CAUGHT ALONE, GET NO

Director Ivan Reitman duffs off his grabat pack to help us celebrate 30 years of Ghostbusters. PLUS: New scenes in The Final Ghostbusters, and the best Ghostbusters goodies released to celebrate the film's anniversary.

by MICHAEL DOYLE, ADAM CLARKE and ANDREA BORGESANI

24 STILL TONY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Celebrating 40 years of Brian, co-founder Lloyd Kaufman explains why he still rages against the machine. by ANDREA BORGESANI

30 SMALL TALKS TO RIVERDALE

America's favourite teenagers square off against older gods and zombie hordes in Ardenly's With Archie.

by APRIL SNELLINGS

34 CHEWERS IN THE SEWERS

Thirty years after it crawled out of the town, director Douglas Cheek remembers Z.H.M.B. Its cult classic.

by MICHAEL DOYLE



DEPARTMENTS

NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND

As the winter months roll in, it's good...

POST-MORTEM

Let's look back at the movies and events...

DREADLINES

Reminders of the things happening...

THE CONSUMER'S REPORT

What's new and what's hot...

NEEDFUL THINGS

Check out the best of the season...

MEMENTO MORALI

In 1984, the film was a great Halloween party, featuring...

CINEMASCOPE

The latest film, the newest...

THE LATE NIGHT ARCHIVE

As the year, the film is...

BOYFRIEND'S BASEMENT

The film, the film, the film...

GLASS IN YOUR COLOURS

The film, the film, the film...

THE NINTH CIRCLE

The film, the film, the film...

THE FRIGHT GALLERY

The film, the film, the film...

THE GUNG-HOY

The film, the film, the film...

ADAMS BROS.

The film, the film, the film...

PLAY DEAD

The film, the film, the film...

CLASSIC CUT

The film, the film, the film...

NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND



To quote the wisdom of soundtrack singer Ray Parker Jr.: "Bustin' makes me feel good."

More precisely, watching *Ghostbusters* puts me in that wonderful place that only certain '80s movies can put us in: Films such as *Grease*, *Backstage*, *Runners of the Last Mile*, *Back to the Future*, *For Men's Big Adventure*, *Big Trouble in Little China* and *The Monks Squad*—which boast ambitious pre-EQ effects, catchy soundtracks, wisecracking characters, adventure to burn, seductively happy endings—are a refuge from the realities of adulthood. It's like sneaking off to your old teen hut for a while to read comics and eat *Sherbert*.

One of my happiest times in the past few months was watching the re-released *Ghostbusters* in the theater. It proved the perfect escape during what has been a particularly tough year—everything from unexpected financial challenges to troubled family members to a particularly painful breakup.

And it hasn't been just me, either: the entire *Rue Morgue* family seems to be under a black cloud this year. A bunch of relationships have exploded, several very talented writers have lost their day jobs, three lost a parent, one of our columnists collapsed and very nearly died, spending months in the hospital, another staff member almost died to death after childbirth, and four of us came tantalizingly close to getting killed when our cab driver suffered a heart attack and died at the wheel with his foot on the accelerator, sending us hurtling through a red light and a busy intersection. (We never found out if the paramedics saved him in the ambulance.) On top of it all, it's been an overwhelming year at the magazine as we've exhausted ourselves working crazy hours as we tackle more projects and conventions than ever before.

So, spending a couple hours with Peter, Ray, Egon, and Winston was a welcome break from that, because you can never underestimate the medicinal properties of watching a giant marshmallow man explode at over Manhattan. *Ghostbusters* is more comically fun to watch and watching anything that fun will certainly raise your spirits (just as intended), but what about watching straight-up horror movies? Not horror fans, sometimes accuse us of being "bitch" or all hard sci-fi, for loving delirious into our faces, and we in turn know that we're constantly losing to engaging our faces rather than expressing them. However, when we feel particularly vulnerable, where do horror fans go? Do they just denigrate our faces further or help get us through the night?

I believe it's a very subjective thing, but for myself, I haven't changed my viewing habits, despite some crushing bouts of frustration, loneliness and worry. There's an attraction beyond simple escapism in the very process of overcoming, whether it's the final *Get* escaping the masked madman or fear puts us in a room with unrelenting nuclear assemblers strapped to their backs trying to save the world.

Big Hollywood movies favor happy endings and a return to the status quo, and '80s movies represent the end of the super-happy ending. For example, it's not enough for the *Ghostbusters* to defeat a Serpentine god; they do it in front of a huge crowd of cheering New Yorkers. Winston finally gets a kiss from his lady love—all while the incredibly upbeat theme plays. Instead of returning things to the status quo, it makes them considerably better. Fear is gonna carry that guy right out of the theater because, duh, duh! "Bustin' makes you feel good."

Whereas these movies are downright celebratory, horror films are more life-affirming because the fears we darker the deeper these people and people are sympathetic with actually die along the way. I read a quote by an author/publisher named Andrew Solomon, who penned the novel-writing book *The Wandering Doctor: An Atlas of Demons*, which speak volumes: "The opposite of depression is not happiness but vitality."

When it comes to real life, colonists are wonderful and they fill our spirits, but they're once-in-a-while events and they don't really solve ongoing life problems. Horror films are about surviving, enduring and living tonight as other day. For example, the big horror movie of 1984 was *A Night on Elm Street*, in which the bourgeois stepsister to show us there is no care-of happy ending, that there's always a threat and you must keep fighting. In that way, I believe horror movies are more applicable to real life—they don't make us forget with a party, they remind us to keep fighting the good fight. I find that therapeutic.

I don't love *Ghostbusters* and the nostalgic escape it offers, but I can't live in my teen hut. Horror tales help fortify my home. Both forms are equally valid and necessary and why horror comedies exist.

Lately, why our *Rue Morgue* family has been antipathetic lately this year, we did indeed survive. I could say we came back like a phoenix, but really we were there for each other more like *Ghostbusters*. In 2004, a few things were made very clear to me. The people who really matter stand shoulder to shoulder with you and help keep the frightful beast you at bay. They'll cross the streets when you ask them to. And when everything blows up, they'll stand around to clean up the mess. So thank you to everyone who helped cleaned up the mess and allow this year.

Now, guess a few weeks off in December to recharge my proton pack and I'll be ready for anything 2005 can throw at me.

*Dave
Ally*
dave@rue-morgue.com

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STAFF

PRODUCTION

DAVID BROWN

DAVID BROWN

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DAVID BROWN

CONTRIBUTORS

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

MIKE BEARDSALL

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RUE MORGUE AFTER would not have been possible without the valuable assistance of Mary-Lou Miller, a *Witchblade* contributor, Jason Blagden, and Vito D'Amico.

COVER GHOSTBUSTERS

Design by Andrew Brown

The *Ghostbusters* cover was a labor of love for the entire *Rue Morgue* family. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

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POST MORTEM

COMMENTARY • REVISIONS • CRITICISM



104 ISSUES An awesome milestone for @RueMorgue! Congrats, guys. Keep up the awesome work. Special props to @Ghoulaholic for the cover.

BRIAN BAKER, VIA TWITTER

JUST HAVE TO thank you for your fantastic H.R. Seger tribute in PM149! Now that's how a tribute is done! I've been a Seger fan since Allen came out and I still found some new info in your tribute – very well done. He'll be missed and I really have to get myself to his museum next time I'm in Europe. *Altho* always an outstanding magazine, but this one is my favorite issue.

CLIVEN JIN, VIA FACEBOOK

THANKS FOR THE Seger special edition, it's great! Hope you're enjoying the onset of Autumn and the darkening sky.

DEBBIE HARRY – NEW YORK, NEW YORK

I'M HAPPY TO SEE that I'm not the only one in our house to get excited when the Halloween issue comes in the mail! Thank!

JASON AND LITTLE DANNY (STILL WORKING ON GETTING MAMMY TO LIKE HORROR) – ADDRESS WITHHELD



HORROR HAS BALLS when I was young, with men in the face and pin-headed men who sent you to hell. It grabbed you and stayed with you, but I'm heartbroken by the current crop of cheap ghost movies made for the cost of a cappuccino, where doors close in dark rooms and water glasses move from here to there in a shot... to there in another. That's not worth a cinema ticket, damn it. Is everything a new house power buys these days cursed? Recycled found footage films are better on the page where you don't sit bored for 28 minutes while another mystical old man explains why ghosts are clicks, and then something screams at your face to annoy you. *Horror* has a better home in video

games lately with *Alien: Isolation*, *The Evil Within* and the premise of a return to survival horror in *Resident Evil: Revelations 2*. *Alien: Isolation* has been done to death, friends, and I think it's time to let the ghosts go, horror needs new monsters now, not shadows on dark screens making camera shake and audiences queasy.

MATTHEW WILSON – WIDENHAMPTON, WEST MIDLANDS

I'VE BEEN A FAN and avid reader of *Rue Morgue* for many years now. I was wondering if maybe I had missed an issue that talked about extreme haunted houses? I've been scouring the internet for stuff about McKamey Manor. It's absolutely tucked. I think the *Rue Morgue* would be impressed with it and it would be amazing if one of you were brave enough to go to San Diego and go through it. Happy Halloween!

ERIC SMITH – ACTON, ONTARIO

OMG, WHO WROTE the "Eternally" obit for Marilyn Burns (PM141-43) and described *Reino Chelone* as "gory"? Talk to us.

ED LISAKY, VIA FACEBOOK

OUT OF CENSURE, what happened to having your magazine issue *Horror Black*?

JAMES ALEXANDER MOSS, VIA FACEBOOK

[As part of their policy, Horror Black only comments to three covers at any given time. Let them know you want us back!] –Ed

THANKS FOR HOSTING yet another epic Halloween bash. Night of a Thousand Faces brought out so many epic costumes, an amazing crowd, and great entertainment! We'll be back next year!

ANDREW JUNGLE, VIA FACEBOOK

@RUEMORGUE – so much fun last night. You throw a good party!

ANGIE FUNKE, VIA TWITTER

CONNECTION in the *Reverie* (December) column in PM152 we accidentally ran an incorrect image. The photo accompanying the article should have been *Agnes* for the *Don't Bore Us* reading.

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EXPIRING MINDS

ON RUE MORGUE'S FACEBOOK PAGE



Describe a time when you were *dying-minded* (apart from being a horror fan).

My ex-girlfriend and her mom and only nice people that please in films that deal with suffering, and death.

CLIVEN JIN

When I was 10 or 11, my stupid kids I went to school with accused me of being a "dick" (workshop) just because I watched horror movies and listened to metal. Now whenever I think about it I just laugh at how stupid and ignorant they were!

CLIVEN JIN

I was told by a friend's boyfriend that I was fundamentally broken and violent because I enjoyed horror movies. It actually bothered me more than it should have. *Horror* is my favorite genre.

LEAH ANDERSON

My last roommate so hated the fact that I enjoyed horror films that he tried to convince me that I was actually more of a comedy fan because I also watch comedy sometimes. When I mentioned that I did in fact prefer horror to other genres, he told me that all horror movies were stupid.

MICHAEL CALLENDER/SARAH

I had a girlfriend once tell me that my life-sized statue of Jason brought on evil forces and I was wrong for having it. Good! I do anything but laugh.

JON HAYES

WE WOULD LOVE TO READ YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. PLEASE E-MAIL THEM TO: LETTERS@RUEMORGUEMAG.COM

POST MORTEM

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1000 GARDEN CITY
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WWW.RUEMORGUEMAG.COM

Treadlines



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS — HORROR HAPPENINGS

CONNECTICUT EDUCATORS FACE TERMINATION FOR MAKING HORROR MOVIES

A pair of educators face termination from their jobs after an article by journalist Matthew Kueffner appeared in the October 3, 2014 edition of *The Hartford Courant*. Titled "Two Educators Behind Violence and Rudity in Sloppy Flicks," it concerned the filmmaking hobbies of Mark Foley (principal of Groby Middle School in Connecticut) and Aaron Vuuk (a guidance counselor at Sage Park Middle School).

The creators of such titles as *The Little Collector*, *The Dance of Gothebury* and *Sleazy Beauty* both eschewed — until recently — being anonymously infusing their passion for making horror soaked under the pseudonyms Mark Drexel and Aaron Thomas Howell. This changed after Kueffner's piece appeared, embroiling both men in a controversy that threatens their reputations and livelihoods.

"The manner in which the story was written shows the disparagement of *The Courant* to gain readership," argues Dennis Broderick, a producer for Moongyle Entertainment, the company behind Foley and Vuuk's movies. "The *National Enquirer*-type headlines, and the fact that this story ran for three days on their front page, would make anyone believe that they had some agenda — other than the right for the public to know. Their story was incomplete and skewed. The reporter had no problem naming Mark, Aaron and another person as writers, but one would think he'd have a complete story with all the names."

The fallout from the article was immediate: both men were suspended pending a review by the Board of Education. Adding to their frustration were several errors in the *Courant*'s article, including an incorrect synopsis of their 2008 film, *Most Margie Broderick* believes such inaccuracies betray the half-hearted attempt Kueffner made at researching his subject.

"Our movies are nothing like what's been portrayed in *The Courant* and other news outlets



A screenshot from the Moongyle Entertainment website which has been taken down.

around the world," he says. "The story denigrated the gentlemen involved. The fact that Aaron is listed was known to the reporter, but he chose to leave that out. I would think that a story about a blind movie-maker would be inspirational, but it obviously didn't fit the picture that he was painting."

Speaking exclusively to *Rue Magpie*, Kueffner agrees that a piece about a blind filmmaker would be inspiring, but stresses that every article must be judged on its own merits. The writer also points out that most of the descriptions he used were in fact derived from Moongyle's own website (which has since been taken down).

"I have no problem with people objecting to our decision to publish this, but the argument that we shouldn't have because there was a better alternative story isn't the best argument," says Kueffner. "Broderick is suggesting that *The Courant* was on some sort of mission to hurt these guys. That's not the case and it doesn't make sense. Our publication of the story was based on our judgment that their side business was newsworthy, not that we had any objection to their business. Based on the number of reader comments, this was an issue with very significant reader interest, and that probably paid a significant role in deciding where the stories would play."

The new low raised debate over whether or not

Foley and Vuuk's films (which feature nudity, violence and explicit dialogue) are an appropriate activity for two men working with children in the education field.

"The question wasn't whether anyone at *The Courant* approved or disapproved of the sexually charged content," says Kueffner, insisting that this is what his piece focused on, not the gory material. "Some people here seemed to honestly find it offensive and degrading to women, others found it absolutely tame and nothing else. Further, it was a judgment about whether this was information we should share with the community or suppress."

Although Foley's fate remains undecided at press time, Vuuk refused to work on October 23 after serving a ten-day suspension — on the proviso he sign a contract promising not to make any films featuring controversial content. Broderick feels Kueffner's article has damaged Moongyle and suppressed the men's right to artistic expression.

"We've been accused of focusing on killing writers — [but] we kill everyone!" he asserts. "It's a horror movie, that's what you do. For an intelligent adult, there should be no problem separating a hobby from work."

MICHAEL DOYLE

KICKSTARTER-FUNDED POE BUST UNVEILED IN BOSTON

October 30th, 2014 saw a fitting homecoming to one of the greatest literary wanderers, Edgar Allan Poe, with a life-sized bust of the author unveiled at the Boston Public Library. Cast in bronze and created by Bryan Moore, the work was funded by a Kickstarter campaign that ended this past July and raised \$35,102, surpassing its \$30,000 goal, thanks to 250 backers. The project's largest financial supporter was none other than Guillermo del Toro.

"Within twenty minutes of our Kickstarter campaign going live, he gave us \$12,000," says project producer Izzy Lee, who aided in the organization of the online campaign by doing with media requests and sourcing donors. "That was a dream come true. Del Toro had donated to the H.P. Lovecraft bust project and he stepped up again. Del Toro will actually be getting a replica of the bust delivered to his home and we're very excited that he'll have that."

The H.P. Lovecraft bust was also created by Moore and was the result of a Kickstarter campaign in 2012, which raised over \$28,000 and resulted in the piece being installed in the writer's hometown of Providence, Rhode Island.

"After the landmark success of the H.P. Lovecraft bust last year, the natural progression of genre authors led right to Edgar Allan Poe," explains Moore, who began his career working as a sculptor on the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series. "The art gallery for the work for both busts has, of course, been libraries, which is most fitting as my work really focuses on artists that I like."

Moore adds that, in the spirit of both Poe and Lovecraft, he infused his own mystery into the busts.

"Each bust has a secret message inscribed on the back and I leave it for the budding detectives out there to decipher, much like Poe would include in the occasional cryptogram."

While Poe, who died in 1849 at age 40, has long been associated with cities such as Philadelphia and Baltimore (he spent considerable time in both, and both now house various memorials and statues of the author), Boston—where he was born—only began officially recognizing him in 2009 (his bicentennial), revealing the intersection near his birthplace Edgar Allan Poe Square. October also saw the unveiling of Stetson Beckman's life-size sculpture, titled *Poe Returning to Boston*, in the square. The statue portrays Poe mid-stride with his briefcase falling open and a raven flying out of it. The statue spills into the rest of the square with insidiously featuring some of the writer's most famous quotes.

In addition to these honors, Poe himself came to Boston on Halloween night in the form of actor Jeffrey Combs, who is best known for playing Dr. Herbert West in Stuart Gordon's *Re-Animator*, as



The bronze Poe bust unveiled at the Boston Public Library with sculptor Bryan Moore (left of bust), project producer Izzy Lee (right of bust), actor Jeffrey Combs (second from right) and project poster designer Graham Muehlstein (left of Moore).

well as Poe himself in Gordon's *Masters of Horror* episode "The Black Cat." After the unveiling of the bust, Combs donned his Poe attire for a performance of his one-man show, "Nervemore," at the Somerville Theatre. Directed by Gordon and written by his longtime writing collaborator Dennis Proke, the production, which has played in various cities over the past several years, has been lauded for Combs' turn as the hard-drinking, megalomaniac author.

It's not surprising that Boston has been late in celebrating Poe, as he maintained a famously contentious relationship with his hometown, believing the city was only concerned with the wealthy elite and writers who thought it was more important to track minds through their

prism rather than entertain their audiences.

"Well, it's been about 165 years (since Poe's death), so I think the grudge is starting to wear off," says Lee. "I think he had more of a problem with the elite than with the city itself, and I think he just characterized everyone under that one umbrella. He had some major problems with [poet Henry Wadsworth] Longfellow and Poe would go on to inspire poets and publicity men against things like that, so he made a lot of enemies. [Boston] still has a huge literary tradition, people love the classics and they love to read and they love Poe no matter how long he's lived in Boston. I'm really excited to be helping bring Poe back to this city."

ALEX W.

BRITISH LIBRARY EXHIBITION CELEBRATES 250 YEARS OF GOTHIC TERROR

The Gothic has long been a part of horror, and the British Library in London, England is celebrating that tradition with *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination*, the largest exhibition ever dedicated to Gothic literature.

On now until January 20, the exhibit traces 250 years of Gothic storytelling through rare manuscripts and books, as well as paintings, film posters, props and even fashion, illustrating the ways in which we are forever haunted by tales of ghosts and demons and madness lurking in eerie castles, abbeys and forests. As co-curator Tim Pye puts it, "That form of literature that lets your imagination run wild, that features dark, macabre imagery and elements of supernatural wonder and intrigue. And is designed to lead or appeal to the emotions and create feelings of fear and terror."

The bulk of the exhibition comes from the library's own rare collection, with special items borrowed from other galleries and museums. It all starts with Horace Walpole, the British Enlightenment author who coined the term "gothic fiction" with his 1764 novel *Castle of Otranto*, continuing on through Ann Radcliffe, William Blake, and the so-called golden age of Gothic literature that led to the Bronte Sisters and Mary Shelley's



Frankenstein (1818). On display: handwritten pages from Shelley's manuscript for the book, with notes from her future husband Percy Shelley in the margins.

"It's been estimated that one in every three novels written in the 1790s is Gothic," notes Pye.

While literature is the core of the exhibition, as it moves into the 20th century elements from film become more important. Typed pages from Stanley Kubrick's annotated script of *The Shining* are on display near Clive Barker's original film script and sketches for *Hellraiser*. An entire (red) room is dedicated to *Dracula*, complete with a Victorian vampire slaying kit. Ghastly posters, train-bound Gwyneth Paltrow in Hammer horror films, inject colour into this black and white world.

For those who associate gothic more with music and fashion, the exhibition includes a section on the goth subculture, with archival magazines, vinyl records and photos from the 1970s scene, and a small gallery of new photographs of goths in full regalia, taken by Martin Parr at this year's Whitty Goth Weekend festival.

For a genre so associated with the historical, the Gothic proves remarkably adaptable to change. *Terror and Wonder* captures the key moments in its evolution and acknowledges that it's far from over. Who is the most important gothic figure today?

"The Zombie, most definitely," says Pye.

LISA LADOGGIER

ENTRAILS

Japanese filmmaker Takashi Miike (*Audrey*, *Love the Killer*) has been honoured with the Maverick Director Award at this year's Rome Film Festival. The director was attending the event to screen his latest movie, *As the Gods Fall*. The film is based on the popular manga series *Aburatsubo no Ichi Tatsu*, written by Muneyuko Kurosawa and drawn by Akiji Kurokawa; it sees high school students forced to play a series of games where the penalty of losing is death.

In wake of news that *Twin Peaks* will be back for a new season in 2016, it has also emerged that series co-creator and executive producer Mark Frost will write a bi-episode prior to the series returning to the small screen. Frost's novel, *The Secret Lives of Twin Peaks*, will cover what the residents of the small Washington town have been up to and promises to shed insight into the ongoing mystery of Laura Palmer. The book will be published through Macmillan's Flatiron Books in 2015.

Detroit-based record label Cargo Flower Records has joined forces with CV Books to release *Marble*

Notes! An illustrated tribute to Celtic Frost is a comic with illustrated anecdotes from a variety of musicians. Contributors include Acid Witch's Slaughter Dave, Obituary's Trevor Power and Autopsy's Chris Reifert. The book is available now and is limited edition 12" LP of Celtic Frost covers is due later in the year.



A club for amateur and professional clowns is hitting out at American Horror Story: *Freak Show* claiming that the show perpetuates the myth that clowns are evil. Clowns of America International's club president Greg Kohlberger told The Hollywood Re-

porter, "We do not support in any way, shape or form any medium that sensationalizes or adds to stigmatization." Kohlberger's anger is directed at the hideous, inhuman *AKS* character Twisty the Clown. It has been reported that membership to Clowns of America International has dwindled to 2500 members in the past year.

George A. Romero has lent his voice to *Zombie Squash* a new, free game available to download now. Romero voices the villain, Dr B. E.V.I., his world where vegetation has gone wild from evil experiments gone wrong. Music for the game is provided by Roy Z of Judas Priest. *Zombie Squash* is available for Android and iOS devices, for more information visit zombiesquash.com.

Ed Ratti's *Outer Fears* is set to revisit the big screen, but instead of a remake, this remake will be using the same script from Ratti's 2002 debut. Set to direct is *Intruder's* Travis Zaremski, while Ratti is on board to executive produce the feature. The movie is set for a 2015 release.

CHARLOTTE STEAR

MONSTRO BIZARRO

Just in time for the holidays comes *Monstro*, a new book from British explorer/cryptologist, Adam Davies. The author—who has spent years combing jungles, lakes and mountains in search of undocumented creatures—recalls his adventures aimed specifically at the discovery of upright-walking "primateoids" said to exist around the world. According to him, the book is not your typical examination of cryptid creatures, but rather his own accounts of facing sometimes dangerous situations such as mountain trails, avalanches and stalking tigers, while searching places such as China (for the Yeti), Russia (for the Almas), Nepal (for the Yeti) and Sumatra (for the Orang Pendek).

"LIFE BLACKBURN

DATE UNKNOWN/CLARK/DOE/STILLERSON

CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

51

Sopranos' Moreso claimed to have suffered nightmares for two weeks after reading the script for *M. Night Shyamalan's* *The Village*.

A 66-year-old UK woman was pronounced dead after a fall in which her contraceptive coil perforated her uterus. A laser of hospital beds drove the woman to live with the coil for 26 years.

According to his daughter, David Kerkoff had to have three major back surgeries during his lifetime as a result of carrying Cole Cline up the stairs of the wheelchair in the climax of *Point Break*.

This past October doctors in Edinburgh, Scotland spent half an hour removing a three-inch-long leech from the nose of British backpacker Dennis Lynam. For weeks prior the 24-year-old had disassembled the object in her nostril as congealed blood.

Before moving into make-up effects, creature designer Stan Winston made a thing as a stand-up comedian and had aspirations of becoming an actor.

The headless corpse in the end of William Lustig's *Murder* is the same prop used by Tina Turner to parody a dead Betty Palmer in *Friday the 13th*.

Garrett Maltby, a 19th-century (35 years) accidentally shot himself dead while obtaining a murder suspect. He was trying to demonstrate that a supposed victim could have accidentally shot himself and did not realize the gun was loaded. His client was acquitted.

Neo-Chemistress Missions/creator Robo Hopper was originally attached to direct *Matrix Reloaded* Universal Studios, but when the studio balked at the bizarre project, he departed.

British actor Gareth Jones died of a heart attack while performing in a live televised play in 1958 – in which his character was scripted to have a heart attack. The rest of the cast improvised around his death and finished the play.

Herschell Gordon Lerner's *Blond Venus* (1953) is the oldest film on the list of offbeat "video nasties."

Although the score is credited to Golden, one of the more effective soundtrack themes is Queen's *Planius* ("Haley") was composed and performed by Bill Wyman. Better known as the lead for The Rolling Stones for 31 years.

In 1953 jockey Frank Hayes won a race at Belmont Park in New York despite being dead. He suffered a heart attack mid-race, but his body stayed in the saddle until his horse crossed the line for a 25-1 outsider victory.

Dropout Mike director Denis Segal died in 1981 while shooting a TV interview, when he accidentally walked into the tail rotor blades of a helicopter and was nearly decapitated.

COMPILED BY MONICA K. KATZ AND GARY ALDERMAN
TO: 1-800-333-3333 (TOLL FREE) OR 1-800-333-3333

BODY HORROR

FLYING FORDS

ARTIST: Dave McKean (dave@mcnean.com)

"I love to illustrate in this specific style, shading by lines, dots and ink. I enjoy when I also like to add abstract elements whenever I'm allowed – in this case the birds, the stripes, the stripes as a grey brush stroke. Ninety percent of my illustrations are done with fine line markers."

SICK TOP SIX

MONSTROUS SLIME MUTANTS



1. INCREDIBLE MEETING MAN
SEVERELY SECRETING CANNIBAL KILLER

2. DILY MANIA
REVENGE OF THE TUDOR

3. BODY MEET
SLAPY SMALL TOWN TEST SUBJECTS

4. SLIME CITY
HOMICIDAL CITY... SLICKER

5. BIO SLIME
BODOM BODAZARD VICTIMS

6. SEPTIC MAN
SEMI-SLATHERED CITY WORKER



TORTURED TROGLINES

ROBAN (1996)

"THUNDERING BUT OF UNKNOWN
SNAKE, THE SUPER SONGSHELL CREATURE
NO WEAPON COULD DESTROY!"

Necronomicomics

BY JAY P. FORGETT



Scene from the director's out of "SILVER BULLET" when the werewolf protects the kids from a rampaging Chevy Chase.

See more of Jay's work at jaypforgett.com

NEEDFUL THINGS

1 SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT
LIMITED EDITION BOX SET
\$129

Aurora comes early with *Flight Right/Glitter Right*. Giddy right girl set. Whipped in a box that pays homage to the classic yuletide slasher, each one includes a SN 08 T-shirt, blue "ugly sweater" headband, custom ornament featuring Lincee Gargley leaping on deer rears, and a "Naughty" stocking. (On sale December 1st and limited to 225, so don't get left out in the cold.)

Only the weighted need apply at
light-2004.com



2 NECESSARY EVIL ZOMBIE DRESS

Fall into the clutches of the undead with the zombie dress adorned with the gory garter with a zipper. The clingy off-the-shoulder little black dress, combined with the bright color palette of decomposing flesh, is sure to invite for

Draw to fill at kateandoffspring.co.uk



3 2015 DAN HENK
HORROR CALENDAR
\$2.95

For the third year in a row, tribute artist Dan Haskins created a selection of original horror art to adorn your walls for the coming year. Featured artists include fellow tributors Barry Lee Woodruff and Paul Acker, as well as Godzilla comic illustrator Jeff Zornow.

Watch the months pass in horror at rainbowinsevents.com



4 PENNYWISE ZIP-UP HOODIE
\$34.95

If you want to break out your courophobic nerves at the drop of a ponytail, get yourself one of these hoodies based on the iconic dancing clown from the TV adaptation of Stephen King's *IT*. No word as to whether it'll help you feel — but then again, we all float here here.

Spend your parties wisely at eventbrite.com



CRYPTIC COLLECTIBLES THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS ECTO-1 (October 1999)

Kenner's 1984 hit film spawned a successful 1985-87 animated TV series. *The Real Ghostbusters*, which, in turn, produced a mountain of merchandise, including a line of action figures, vehicles and playsets from Kenner. One of the most popular of these was the *Ghostbusters*' signature vehicle, the Ecto-1, released in 1985. Meanwhile, 14 series (the *Evil*

with a swiveling garnier seal for the roof and a steel accessory which could reel in the accompanying orange float. Some examples can sell for around \$40, while boxed specimens can fetch more than \$250 on eBay.

APPENDIX 1

WORLDWIDE CALL TOLLFREE AT 1-800-848-2266



SLIME-DRIPPING GHOSTS, RED-EYED DEMON DOGS AND A SKYSCRAPER-TALL
MARSHMALLOW MONSTER — DIRECTOR IVAN REITMAN DUSTS OFF HIS PROTON PACK
TO HELP US CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF **GHOSTBUSTERS**

DON'T GET CAUGHT ALONE, OR NO

By
MICHAEL
DOTT



THE ABILITY TO ENDLESSLY RE-WATCH A FILM FOR DECADES AND STILL RETAIN A PREVAILING SENSE OF CHILD-LIKE WONDER, AWE AND TERROR IS SOMETHING TO BE CHERISHED.

When we are young and possessed of low-discriminating tastes and prejudices, we embrace all manner of cinematic insanity with a less-judicious eye. As we grow into adulthood, the movies we viewed as kids may unravel their lies, but their power to transport us often remains undiminished. They still master our eyes with nostalgia, soothe our pulse with excitement and prickle our flesh with goosebumps. For many millions of fans across the world, one movie that has always maintained this proficiency is *Ghostbusters*. Even Reitman's spectacular fusion of side-splitting laughs, spine-chilling scenes and jaw-dropping special effects.

Back in the summer of 1984, just about everyone had to see the movie — and just about everyone did. In fact, a frequently repeated anecdote that illustrates what is remarkable about *Ghostbusters* is that the movie's veracity became a concern producers/directors Reitman's decision to run a promotional trailer on television that utilized the mock commercial featured in the film. Placing an active phone number in with the clip, a mystic calling it would hear a recorded message from stars Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd apologizing for being absent as they were "out catching ghosts right now." It's been claimed that the line received 1,000 calls an hour 24 hours a day for the following six weeks — an early indicator to Reitman that *Ghostbusters* was well on its way to becoming the biggest-grossing genre film of the year.

Scouted under the *90s Shenanigans* era, the story revolves around three (or four) parapsychologists in New York — Peter Venkman (Murray), Raymond Stantz (Aykroyd) and Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis) — who are fired from their university jobs. In desperation, they establish a company based in a dilapidated firehouse that promises consumers it can eradicate all manner of paranormal phenomena. Spengler is known as the "proton-pack" — which is basically an "unlicensed nuclear accelerator" strapped to their backs — the *Ghostbusters* are able to "trip" (speaking metaphorically) with an

energy beam before housing them in a containment unit. A sudden increase in paranormal activity throughout the city means business is booming, so the guys draft a fourth member into their team, Winston Zeddemore (Eric Siodock), who follows the course of ghostly goings-on as an occultistic owner of the Last Judgment!

Meanwhile, the apartment of Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver), one of the *Ghostbusters*' first clients, is haunted by a demonic entity known as Zuul. Dana is possessed by this malignant spirit and transformed into the "Galekappa," whilst her neighbor, Louis Tully (Rick Moranis), is sinisterly bedeviled by a being called Vanz Dortho and becomes the "Keymaster." Both warn the *Ghostbusters* of the impending arrival of Gaster the Gazer (an ancient Babylonian god of destruction). Soon afterwards, Walter Peck (William Atherton), a meddling official from the Mayoral office, has the team arrested on suspicion of polluting the environment with their unregulated equipment. Peck orders the containment unit to be shutdown, thus freeing an army of hordes of multi-dimensional wreaths that terrorize The Big Apple. With the prospect of news being the dead rising and, um, kids and dogs living together, the *Ghostbusters* are released from custody to confront Gaster for the sake of humanity.

Ghostbusters draws on a variety of horror films and comedies for inspiration, including *Lawrence of Arabia* (1927), a Walt Disney cartoon in which Mickey, Donald and Goofy play three bumbling ghost-hunters (of who, *ghost!*), *Body and Soul* (1925), "I

ain't scared of no ghost," anticipating one of the signature lines from Ray Parker Jr.'s hit theme song for *Ghostbusters*, *The Cat in the Hat* (1930), *The Ghost Breakers* (1940), *Ghost Catchers* (1944), *The Exorcist* (1973) and *The Shining* (1976). Grossing a reported \$200 million worldwide, *Ghostbusters* not only spawned a 1986 sequel and an animated series (pg. 20), but also a playdate at Toys, video games, comics and other merchandise. The famed "no ghosts" logo is also cited as one of the first examples of "blockbuster branding" and would be followed by the marketing regimen for *Dances With Wolves*, *Jurassic Park* and *Transformers*.

With the release the past September at deluxe 35-mm of both *Ghostbusters* and *Ghostbusters II* — who ya gonna call to commemorate the film's 30th anniversary? Why, it has to be none other than Ivan Reitman himself, director of such other Hollywood hits as *Sleepers*, *Jaws* and *Deadline*, and before that kicking off his career in Toronto by writing and directing *Canadian Sled* (1972) and producing early David Cronenberg films. *Slivers* and *Rebel Crews* juggling more than 20 projects in various stages at the moment, the 67-year-old Czech-born Canadian filmmaker found time in his crunched schedule to penitit *the Mirror* an exclusive interview about the movie that made millions of kids wonder what it was like to get a lined



**TEN YEARS AFTER HAVING THE HELLER
BARTENDER, YOUR FIFTH FEATURE FILM IS
A HORROR. HOW DID THAT PROJECT COME
YOUR WAY?**

Don Aykroyd had done a 40-page treatment that he'd originally written for himself and John Belushi to star in, but then, tragically, Belushi died. I'd just finished working with Bill Murray on *Stripes* and Danny wanted to know — because I knew Danny from my days in Toronto — if there was a way that maybe he and Billy could do the movie together, and I would also be involved in directing it. So I read Danny's treatment and immediately thought it was too fantastical. It took place in the future and featured several groups of Ghostbusters rather than just the one team. There were some really outlandish things in it, but it also contained a number of brilliant ideas — namely that these guys were almost like firemen, except they were out catching ghosts instead of putting out fires. I then met with Danny and we talked about it, and I suggested to him that we bring in Harold Ramis as both co-writer and actor. I basically just pitched a film that took place in Tarkenton's contemporary location and really told the story of how the Ghostbusters first came to be.

**DO YOU WORSHIP CLOSELY WITH AYKROYD AND
RAMIS AS THE SCRIPT?**

I worked tightly with them. It was really my story — really — that got rewritten. My approach to the story was that there were these three guys who had been working as university professors in New York at that time. They got kicked out and start a business together busting ghosts. We then went off to Martha's Vineyard together for two weeks — Danny, Harold and myself — and the three of us basically hammered out a draft of the script. We decided early on to delineate the three Ghostbusters with their own distinctive characteristics and attributes that sort of identified them. [Ray] was the heart, [Egon] was the brain and [Peter] was the mouth. So I tried to invest the story with a certain degree of realism that reduced some of the more fantastical elements and placed more emphasis on the characterizations.

**SHOWING HOW IMPROVISED HARBOLD, AYKROYD
AND RAMIS WERE AS CHARACTERS, DID YOU ACTUALLY
ENCOURAGE THEM TO IMPROVISE ADDING
IMPROVIS?**

Well, two of them guys are official writers as Ghostbusters and the third one is probably the most adept improviser in the world — so, yes, I did. I viewed the improvisations as almost being like we were writing a draft of the script as we were actually shooting the film.

**WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF
MAKING GHOSTBUSTERS?**

The challenge for me was making it both scary and funny — achieving that very delicate balance. The fun comes from the actual making of the film, being allowed to shoot on all the streets in New York and dealing with thousands of people. I'd never had to deal with that level of stuff before as a director.



There is No Doctor: (from top) Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) observes a possessed Cam (Robert Downey Jr.) driving; (below) Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man

**CONSIDERING THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF THE PRO-
DUCTION, AND THE FACT THAT YOU WERE MAKING
A GOOD STEVEN SPIELBERG, DID YOU OVERBOARD
EXTENSIVELY?**

No, not extremely, but in some of the more complicated visual effects scenes — particularly the climactic ones that took place with the Stay-Pufters up on the roof with Egon; the Marshmallow Man and everything — yes, I did. I storyboarded the scenes where there were lots of various elements involved — different kinds of special effects and visual effects — so I had to co-ordinate a lot of things.

**IT'S BEEN REPORTED THAT YOU ENCOUNTERED
CLOSING CENTRAL PARK FOR A WEEK WHEN YOU
WERE SHOOTING ON LOCATION IN NEW YORK. IS
THIS ACCURATE?**

We didn't, as a matter of fact, ever close Central Park, but we did close parts of Central Park West which is a street. We never really closed it for more than an hour at a time. I mean, the blocks were certainly not that happy because it slowed down traffic, but I thought it was okay. It was relatively easy to do, actually.

**HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED HOW THEY INTER-
EST GHOSTBUSTERS WOULD BE IF IT HAD BEEN**

**SET IN SOME OTHER MAJOR AMERICAN CITY SUCH
AS LOS ANGELES OR DETROIT?**

Yeah, and we talked a lot about that very thing. But you know, I found the New York aspect of Ghostbusters to be extremely important. I mean, we were effectively using the city of New York as if no other actor in the movie.

**YOU EARLIER MENTIONED YOUR CONCERN
ABOUT STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN LAUGH
AND SCARE, BUT DID YOU EVER INTENTIONALLY
CHANGE THE IMPACT OF ONE OF THE
SCENES THAT YOU THOUGHT WOULD BE
A LITTLE TOO STRONG?**

No, not at all, because I always wanted Ghostbusters to be scary. I wanted the scenes to work within the context of the film. So it was supposed to be occasionally frightening. But naturally, I also intended it to be very humorous as well.

**I REMEMBER SEEING THE MOVIE IN THEATERS
AS A KID AND BEING BY PETER DINKLAGE,
WAS THE CREDITS PART APPARENTLY
THE BEGINNING AND SUBSEQUENT TRANSFORMED
INTO THIS UNEXPECTED APPROPRIATE THREE
WASN'T A VERY DEEP IN THE BARREL?**

[Laughs] I think that scene is one of the little

THE MORGUE SURVEYS SOME OF THE BEST
GHOSTBUSTERS GOODIES RELEASED TO CELEBRATE
THE FILM'S ANNIVERSARY



SWAG FROM SPOOK CENTRAL

BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

STAY PUFT LIMITED EDITION MARSHMALLOW FIGURES

A special edition to celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Ghostbusters* and *Ghostbusters II* (by Ray Parker Jr. and Run-DMC, respectively) on a white vinyl 12" with 3-D insetocular images and a six-inch figure of the iconic Mr. Stay Puft would have been enough to fry our eggs on a counter, but Legacy Recordings went the extra mile by making the whole affair marshmallow-scented. Limited to 3000.
ghostbusters30th.com

PUNKY FIGURES

Parker's Punky has got it on the official licensing fun with 3 1/4" tall vinyl figures of our boys in bogs (plus a special edition of "bared" Stay Puft, which starts at \$1), first shown at last year's San Diego Comic-Con. The \$500 exclusives included a comic book of the "Busters" cavorted in melted marshmallow and a "skinned" Peter Venkman with a glow-in-the-dark Slimer, but you can choose between Peter, Ray, Egon, Slimer, Stay Puft or Winston (who comes with a mini Ecto-1).
funko.com

KRISPY KREME DONUTS

When you're got the merchies, who you gonna call? Krispy Kreme rose to the occasion with two limited marshmallow Kreme-filled confondations, available for a limited time. Choose between the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man's cheeky face or the classic "Busters logo on a swirl of green slime."
krispykreme.com

GALLERY 1988 ART SHOW PRINTS

If you happened to be in New York, LA, Chicago or San Diego last year, you might have been lucky enough to catch the Gallery 1988 traveling art show, featuring original artwork and limited edition prints of all things *Ghostbusters*. If you missed it, the good news is you can still pick up some of these amazing prints from artists including Godmeachine, Dave Perillo and Justin Erickson.
ghostbusters30th.com

GHOSTBUSTERS OFFICIAL LEGO SET

Legs has released a special edition set with reprints of our favorite paranormal protectors (complete with proton packs, traps and PKE meters) and a build-it-all of their ride, the Ecto-1. The kit can be found for around \$150 whenever Lego is sold, and is a fun for fans aged 10 and up—sorry to
lego.com [search "Ghostbusters"]



things about Ghostbusters that I liked, I liked the idea of the Library Ghost suddenly transforming into this scary monster because I imagined the audience very early on that this movie was not going to be what they perhaps thought. It was going to be. What always happened when people watched Ghostbusters was they would scream and then sit out of jump up out of their seats! Then they would all laugh and relax a little, because they suddenly realized that they had been caught. They had been scared in that very habitual, human way, you know? So that particular scare, which as you mentioned occurs fairly early on, sort of helped to quickly establish the whole tone of the film.

I WENT OUTSTANDING TO DISCOVER THAT AT ONE POINT THE CONSIDERED POSTERIZING GHOST THE HAZARDER OF THE BEVE, AND THEN LATER AS THE FORTUNE, THE ADJECTIVE OF GHOST'S HAZARDER AND THE FORTUNE OF THE GHOST OF GHOST. IS THAT TRUE?

I'm not quite sure where you heard that Oscar was going to be the Devil, but it's true that we weren't always sure what Oscar was finally going to be. We were trying to create our own mythology in Ghostbusters and, for that reason, we wanted to hit something that was a little more original and intriguing than the Devil.

THE FOUR GHOSTS FINALLY REVEALED IN ORDER TO REVEAL THE GHOSTWRITER IS, OF COURSE, THE GHOST WRITER-POST MORTALITY. AND, IN A PREVIOUS INTERVIEW YOU HAVE EXPRESSED FEARS THAT THE GHOSTWRITER MIGHT BE FINISHED BY THE FORTUNE OF BEING "GHOSTWRITER" WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Well, the Marshall show Man was kind of goofy. It was certainly pushing the envelope—both conceptually and tonally—and, as a matter of fact, in Danny's original idea it was just one of maybe 50 creatures and appeared around page twenty. I mean, everything in Ghostbusters is fairly realistic even though of course some fantastical things do happen in the film. I think the Marshall show Man clearly sits outside of the common imagery we always see in movies in terms of what monsters look like, and what bad guys look like, and what the Devil looks like. I was a little concerned that we would lose the tone of the film when this thing eventually appeared on-screen, but the Marshall show

Man actually turned out to be one of the most memorable and wonderful things in the movie.

WAS THERE ANYTHING TOO WEIRD AND TOO REALITY OR FILM FOR SOMEbody?
No, actually.

WERE THERE ANYTHING TOO WEIRD AND TOO REALITY OR FILM FOR SOMEbody?
No, actually.

Yes, there was, and we actually shot that terrible sequence, but I didn't like it. I can clearly remember doing the scene, but I don't think we ever really finished it because I didn't think that it worked. As a matter of fact, as I say, in the original idea for Ghostbusters there were multiple numbers of ghosts and monsters of all kinds—some of which would've had to have been realized in large-scale. We removed most of them from the script because of time and money if we had actually shot that version of



FOR SEVEN SEASONS THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS BROUGHT SPECTRES, BOOBYMEN, EDOGNAFTAN CREATURES AND OTHER MONSTERS TO SATURDAY MORNING

BEYOND GOZER

"GHOSTBUSTERS WEARING AN OCTOPUS HAT," THAT'S THE WAY PETER VENKMAN DESCRIBED CTUHUHU, IN WHAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF HIS BEST SCENES.

That tale wasn't spoken by Bill Murray, but by Lawrence Russo (best known as the voice of Garfield in numerous prime-time animated specials), who also voiced Venkman in *The Real Ghostbusters*. Buckle up for the limitless possibilities of animation, along with script writer by the likes of John Shirley (*The Crow*, *Michael Rooker*, *The Night People*) and J. Michael Straczynski (*Star Trek: Voyager*, *World War Z*). The *Real Ghostbusters* series leaned towards horror more than other Ghostbusters Men. For that reason we put together this handy list of the series' creepiest episodes.

"THE BOOBYMEN COMETH" (SEASON 1, EPISODE 4)

Horror is the concept: Will you can see two lips, and open them, the Boobyman looks like a cross between The Joker and Satan, making it the spookiest of the show's creature designs.

"KNOCK, KNOCK" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 11)

From 1986 to 1991, the *Real Ghostbusters* ended network airtime with a budget cut and cost changes in AGO. The 65-episode second season focused on syndication where lots of network censoring, the series delved into slightly darker stories. The season's first installment follows the Ghostbusters' attempts to close a portal to hell while encountering bizarre sights, such as a gallery of endangered species floating on air ("Don't row so fast. We have all evening"). "Knock, Knock" isn't chilling because a doorway to hell opened, but that it was opened only in hell, demons and human souls went to inhabit the Earth following humanity's inevitable collective

"DOCTOR, DOCTOR" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 14)

Crushed in a mix of entrapment and experimentation, Ghostbusters offer a horror twist, our heroes find the ecto-chemical slug can't be removed. After every shower the substance reproduces under their skin and bursts through their pores, covering all four Ghostbusters from the neck down. Thank Ghostbusters with a touch of Cronenberg.

"KAGNAROK 3.0" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 19)

Convinced humanity is better off dead, a young, over-zealous environmentalist, Kagnarok, and an army of gargoyles is the world. Full of dynamic visuals, the episode's climax moment shows the antagonist's temporary transformation into ghost with a decayed nose and pupil-less eyes.

"THE COLLECT CALL OF CTUHUHU" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 20)

Deluded over the Mountaintop and being the love-stricken in a back to New York, The Ghostbusters team up with an occult researcher at Anchoa (named Alex Denby) to find a way to send Chitlins back. Unapologetically, the station has in an old issue of *Wired* files. This is what Ghostbusters 2 should've been.

Ghostbusters would have probably been a \$300 million movie — even back in 1984.

YOU RECEIVED A SUMO CRY OF REQUEST-BARTERS FOR A TEST AUDIENCE THAT OBTAINED ONLY A FEW SPECIAL EFFECTS REVENUES. HOW DID IT GO?

We held that test screening at Columbia Studios for an audience of about 300 people and it went as well as any other screening we've ever had of the film. It conformed to me that the story, the comedy and the scares all really worked, and it was a great experience. We filmed a lot of the special effects live, so those things were present in the cut that we watched. What was not present were the visual effects. Many of the mechanical effects were there, but they were substituted. There were also several crew members stable in some of the shots, and some shots were also in black and white and you could see wires and stuff. There was also nothing in the refrigerator during the scene where Sigourney Weaver opens the door and glimpses this strange dimension inside — except for [a card] saying "SCENE MISSING." There was also nothing coming out of the Ghostbusters' gear when they used their proton-packs last, incredibly, none of this seemed to matter to the test audience. The reaction to the film — even in this obviously incomplete form — was just wonderful.



Female Double: From top: Mary McCormack changes form; the effects team prep; and the sequence in which Sully is left. In by Gary and (left) Gary (Sully). Jarring contrasts the Ghostbusters.

"THE THING IN MRS FAYERSHAM'S ATTIC" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 31)

The Ghostbusters are trapped in the attic with a blood-sucking demon that tortures our heroes in a variety of forms, including a squaring cloud of red eyes and a rushing collection of artifacts with a scythe for a hand.

"THE HEADLESS MOTORCYCLIST" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 43)

The Motorcyclist wears a spiky and shiny, wild Man-type outfit and has a limitless supply of flaking motorcycle helmets. The concept is derivative of the *Knight Rider* episode "Dropper," but it looks way better here.

"THE GHOSTBUSTERS IN PARIS" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 46)

Four cartoonish show a ghost's face melting off, but the episode does so in the first three minutes. It's a ghost, but it's a human ghost of the same. Specifically it's one of hundreds of decaying humanity and undead Parisians haunting the Eiffel Tower in a fun, all-too-brief sub-plot. Ray Stantz bears a mummy at the Louvre.



"DAIRY FARM" (SEASON 2, EPISODE 64)

It's Ghostbusters vs. zombies in a weird (writer's) attack a team built near their unmarked graves. Highlights include the *Barney* Nightmare-inspired zombie ride on a horse and a dicky bunny gag where the dead are woken by a rolling zombie rooster whose flesh hangs off its bones.

"THE GRUMBY" (SEASON 3, EPISODE 11)

The Grumbler is a vicious old goblin, searching for "pure" children to abduct and muffle them into fellow Grumbles. Having no older figure protect children and irreversibly transform/polluting them into another child predator cleverly alludes to the earliest type of child sexual abuse. Another spooky twist: This is the only episode on this list produced after Lawrence M. King was fired from the series following Gill Murray's complaint that his character sounded like Garfield (that's funny for you). From season three onwards, Reichen was recast and voiced by Full House's Dave Coulier. Truly a late worse than death.





Ready To Rerelive 'Em (Left to right) Ghostbusters' Dan Aykroyd (ghostbusted), Rick Moranis, Bill Murray, and Harold Ramis (ghostbusted) with the Ecto-1

"I ALWAYS WANTED GHOSTBUSTERS TO BE SCARY." - IVAN REITMAN

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE 1984 SAGUO: IT WASN'T AS WELL-RECEIVED, BUT WAS IT MORE HAPPY WITH IT? Yeah, overall, I was quite happy with it, but I don't think we got the ending of Ghostbusters Right right. The last act — from a script standpoint — didn't quite work, but I'm very happy that people are now beginning to re-evaluate the movie. Its coming out again on Blu-ray and I actually think it's a really funny, lively — and occasionally scary — movie in a slightly different way than the original Ghostbusters is. So, yes, I am happy with Ghostbusters II.

ON A HONEST SIDE NOTE, THIS PAST FEBRUARY WE CAST HAROLD RAMIS IN THREE MOVIES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET ABOUT YOUR LAST FRIEND?

Harold was sort of like a brother to me. I loved the guy. It was just such a great loss. It was a great personal loss and it was also great loss to the world of comedy.

IT SEEMS THAT RECENTLY, EVERY DAY THERE IS SOME KIND OF REPORT OR RUMOR CONCERNING THE CURRENT STATUS OF GHOSTBUSTERS II. IN IT, RECENTLY, WAS IT HAPPY?

Well, we are developing Ghostbusters II and I think I will get made. There have been a lot of reports and rumors about it — most of which are untrue — but I can confirm that we are in high development with it. I certainly won't be directing the third movie, but I will be producing it. [This interview was conducted before the October announcement of Ghostbusters II. -Ed.]

CAN THE ALSO CHRYSLER GROUP THAT PAID FOR [GHOSTBUSTERS] WILL BE REUNITED? Oh, as possible.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION WOULD BE THAT THE THREE ORIGINAL CAST MEMBERS WILL PRAYED A THOUSAND CRY OF GHOSTBUSTERS WHO WILL

BE REUNITED BY THE ORIGINAL TEAM HAVING THEIR OWN FROM THEM IN THE MEANTIME YOU ARE STRONGLY CONSIDERING?

Yeah, I believe it is. The original Ghostbusters are now all in their late 50s, so, inevitably, I think at some level we were always going to have to turn it over to younger people.

WANT DAN AYKROYD AND TOM BEANS WRITE AN AFTERMATH SCRIPT FOR GHOSTBUSTERS II BACK IN THE LATE 1980S?

Yeah, Danny had written a draft that involved the Ghostbusters actually venturing into Hell. That script was not... well, let's put it this way, nobody had the energy to make that film at that particular time.

IT'S OFTEN CLAIMED THAT DAN AYKROYD IS EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO RETURN TO THE FRANCHISE. IS THIS INSIDE THE CASE?

Yes, it is.

IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR REASON FOR HIS DISAPPOINTMENT?

I think Billy is in a different place. He's getting older right now and he just doesn't seem to be particularly interested in coming back.

LOOKING BACK, WOULD YOU SAY YOU WERE ABOUT THE GHOSTBUSTERS EXPERIENCE?

I would have to say it was probably the spectacular success of it.

WANT TO REUNITE A SERIES WHY IT COULD BE ANOTHER PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION AND STILL CONTINUE TO RECAPTURE THE GHOSTBUSTERS?

I think it was mostly because Ghostbusters was different from other movies of the time, and people really liked and responded to the characters. I think audiences also wanted to see the series continue the film offered — in that it was both very funny and surprisingly frightening. So the careful combination of all the men characters with an engaging story, some scary moments, terrific special effects and some top-notch humor was — and it seems continues to be — fairly irresistible.

WANT TO REUNITE A SERIES WHY IT COULD BE ANOTHER PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION AND STILL CONTINUE TO RECAPTURE THE GHOSTBUSTERS?

I might. I was always a huge fan of horror movies, I just haven't had the opportunity to direct another one. I mean, I've produced a few movies since the time I made Ghostbusters that have had a real sort of horror vibe to them — the best of which was probably *Disturbia*. So, you know, if the right project ever came along there is always the possibility that I might direct another horror film. I just don't think it sits at the very top of my wish list at the moment. But, again, I do like the genre.

WANT TO REUNITE A SERIES WHY IT COULD BE ANOTHER PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION AND STILL CONTINUE TO RECAPTURE THE GHOSTBUSTERS?

No, not personally. Billy in the movies.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF **TROMA**, CO-FOUNDER **LLOYD KAUFMAN** EXPLAINS WHY HE STILL RAGES AGAINST THE MACHINE

Still Toxic

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

BY ANDREA SUBISSATI



IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT TROMA. EVEN IF POTTY HUMOUR, GORE GAGS AND GRATUITOUS NUDITY AREN'T YOUR THING, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW THAT SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, AN INDEPENDENT FILM COMPANY IS CHURNING OUT B-MOVIES WITH ZERO REGARD FOR PRODUCTION STANDARDS, CENSORSHIP... OR GOOD TASTE. Call them shock or sleaze or low-brow trash, they are at least honest and, at best, authentic punk-rock genre cinema.

It all began in the early '70s when college classmates Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz started producing low-budget softcore comedies and acquiring B-movies for distribution. The pair quickly developed a reputation for offering the kind of indie flicks you couldn't find elsewhere, and so they founded Troma Entertainment Inc. In 1974 and went on to co-direct and produce all of Troma's titles from 1983 to 1991, including *The Toxic Avenger* (1984), *Class of Nuke 'Em Alpha* (1986), *Troma's War* (1988) and *Air, RoboCop and N.O.S.* (1990).

The publicity-olymp hunt then left the director's chair to focus his efforts on Troma's business end of things, allowing the certified oddball and occasional megamanager Kaufman to become the studio's face (and primary defender of its outrageous output). Of more than 400 titles that Troma has released, Kaufman has directed 56 of them and has producer credits for a whopping 95 (including two that are currently in production). Herz has produced 65 of Troma's films and directed nine. Today, Kaufman and Herz uphold the same broad ideals for Troma they set out when they first started.

"Michael and I love movies, and we wanted to be able to make films with total freedom," says Kaufman. "Since I speak French, I read [the French film magazine] *Cahiers du Cinéma* archives at the Cinémathèque Française when I was at Yale University. The film society had a stack of them and I got brainwashed by the writings of [François] Truffaut, [Jean-Luc] Godard and [Claude] Chabrol, and those guys were developing the auteur theory of cinema, so that's pretty much how we roll today."

As phrases and adds, "Except today we make no money. Other than that,



Gene Corman (L to R) as Uncle Pops in *Mother's Day*, Uncle Pops Corman in *The Toxic Avenger*, and Doc in *Class of Nuke 'Em High*

It's exactly the same."

Between the films co-produced and directed by Hertz and Kaufman, and the 271 regions Tromb picked up for distribution, the genre is one clearly defined by gratuitous nudity, graphic violence and tongue-in-cheek gags laced with racial commentary often were sported from American headlines.

"I think what makes *Spinal* movies unique is that we are the genre," explains Kaufman. "Spencer Play and *Spinal* came out before *Panty's* and we mixed raunch and comedy and satire. And then with *The Toxic Avenger*, we mixed raunch and gore and horror and sex and satire, it was sort of a Cashman of genres. [In] Trombo and Julie we had the unique performers, and to this day I think that's what make our films unique."

But that's not all that's unique about Trombo. The NYC-based studio has endured financial highs and lows throughout the years but remains the longest-running independent film studio in North America.

"I think that's the proudest thing, we've kept this independent movie studio with the same management," asserts Kaufman. "Michael Hertz and I have been partners for 46 years, and I've been happily married for 40 years. That doesn't happen too many times in the movie industry. We've kept our noses clean. We've made a lot of movies, we've distributed a lot of movies and there are always going to be some people that don't like us, but usually in the fullness of time they realize that...we've been decent people, and I'd say that's what I'm most proud of."

Kaufman isn't famous for being easy to work with, however, particularly when it comes to the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) that gave him a bad name as the sadistic studio behind the raucous, dark-superhero romp *The Toxic Avenger*. Trombo's biggest hit, which spawned four sequels, a Broadway musical adaptation, a TV line and an animated children's TV show called *Toxic Crusaders*. As successful as the film was, Kaufman had to get angry with the MPAA to get it released the way he wanted it.

WE'VE MADE A LOT OF MOVIES, WE'VE DISTRIBUTED A LOT OF MOVIES AND THERE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE SOME PEOPLE THAT DON'T LIKE US, BUT USUALLY IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME THEY REALIZE THAT...WE'VE BEEN DECENT PEOPLE, AND I'D SAY THAT'S WHAT I'M MOST PROUD OF.
-LLOYD KAUFMAN

"For *The Toxic Avenger*, to get an R rating and to get into the American theatres, we had to cut twenty minutes," he recalls. "So what we would do is make the cuts, submit the movie, get the R rating and then put those scenes back into the print [and] just send it to the theaters with the R rating and screw everybody."

In his credit, Kaufman initially tried to work within MPAA's guidelines, but quickly discovered a double standard—an experience that would shape Trombo's approach to censorship.

"[In *Joan's*] like, for example, we were required to bite out bullet holes and punches from fist fights, and our movies are not serious violence—it's cartoon violence," he says. "But *Die Hard*, which came out at the same time, was permitted to show in letters that were exploding and huge amounts of blood, so we just stopped trying to work within those rules because it's like Soviet Russia, the rules were there to prevent competition with major

studios."

Kaufman takes as much pride in releasing a glut of titles every bit as loud as he wanted them to be, as he does in Trombo's willingness to take on leading actors and filmmakers, giving them an all-important first break in an industry that isn't especially welcoming to unknowns. Filmmakers such as Eli Roth, Oliver Stone and Tim Parker found their first gigs under the Trombo banner, and among the now-famous actors who had early career appearances in Trombo titles are Marisa Tomei (*The Toxic Avenger*), Kevin Costner (*Walker, Texas Ranger*), Samuel L. Jackson (*Jurassic Park*), Billy Bob Thornton (*Chopper*), Chloë Moretz (*Jennifer's Body*) and Vincent D'Onofrio (*The First Wives Club*).

Another protégé of Kaufman's, James Gunn, paid tribute to his mentor with a brief cameo in this past summer's summer blockbuster *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

"What's amusing—or sad—is that I've gotten more positive reinforcement for that two-second shot than for 50 years of making movies," says Kaufman, "even though the Museum of Modern Art opened *Return to Water*. *The High Life* is a series with Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen. I've got more media attention because of two seconds in *Guardians of the Galaxy*."

And bad movies—he's made a few. Kaufman is known for being uncompromising, and he reports the few instances where he did bend under pressure.

"I compromised on *Sgt. Kabukiman M.P.D.*," he admits. "That was a bigger budget movie and we were co-producing that with the guy from the company that makes *Re-Max*. They wanted a movie that was very mainstream and I wanted a *Trombo* movie, and [in the end] it wasn't either. I gave in a lot and they gave in a lot. It should have been either totally what my friend wanted, or I should have just done what they wanted. I've written six books about how to make movies and the biggest lesson I've come away with, probably the most practical lesson, is that there are only two

**WE ASKED OUR RESIDENT SCHLOCK
EXPERTS — JOHN W. BOWEN AND
LAST CHANCE LANCE — TO LAY
BARE THEIR LOVE OF LLOYD
KAUFMAN'S LOONY LEGACY**

TROMAIZED FOR LIFE!

BY JOHN W. BOWEN
AND LAST CHANCE LANCE

DESCRIBE TROMA IN THREE WORDS.

John Bowen: "Noisy," "crazy" and "more
Last Chance Lanced Cool as fuck!"

WHAT MADE YOU A TROMA FAN?

JB: Not what you'd expect. And the name's Lloyd.
LCL: It started back in 1984 with *The Toxic Avenger*. Some friends brought
a crappy VHS copy of it to a party and I didn't seem anything as appealingly
punky and innocent as *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*. A few years later
I came across *The Class of Nuke 'Em High* and that sealed the deal. I en-
tirely, irrevocably became a Troma fan for life!



"FAVORITE FILM"

JB: *Donor Menstruo*, a sentimental favorite
from my early years at *Rue Morgue*. Paul-
tyrant, because it's an example of Troma's
hermit, no-holds-barred, kitchen sink ap-
proach really working so convincingly on the right
day. *Troma & Juliet* because it's still Troma's
most clever and fully-realized film to date.
LCL: I was supposed to pick just one, wasn't I?

LCL: *Troma & Juliet* because finally some-
body had the guts to present the classic love

story with the multiple dismemberments and incoherent love scenes that
William Shakespeare originally intended, and it's narrated by Motherhead's
very own bylines, for Christ's sake!



OVERLOOKED TITLE?

JB: *Kidnapped in the Sun*, the sister of *Love's Return* (1975). A little bit

Woody Allen, a little bit Charlie Chaplin, a whole lotta Lloyd.
LCL: *Reversal of Fortune*. This one is actually kind of disturbing and
a little scary at times, plus it's pretty good. Those things I'm not used to
from a Troma film.



TIGHTEST ONE TO GET THROUGH?

JB: *Tales from the Crapper*, and it has nothing to do with the content per
se. It's because I find it pretty painful to see Troma fan so darningly feisty.
I know I'm pretty merciless in a lot of my
critiques, but Troma's heart always seems
to be in the right place — fighting the good
fight and all that — and *Crapper* was Lloyd's
at his worst attempt to salvage two films that
had fallen apart during production.



LCL: *400 Kebabians* *NYFD*. A kabu-
themed superhero? Are you kidding me?
What really sucked about it was it was al-
most completely bereft of the immature
pokes and gratuitous violence that makes a
Troma film a Troma film.

GROSSEST SCENE?

JB: The one that keeps in mind at the moment does I actually involve
swear, blood or sex. It's the bit in *Citizen Kane* where Heath
Spencer makes out with Joe Hushaker and a big block of cheese, because
it involves test sucking, which is really, really, really not my thing, and
cheese, which I really, really, really love.

LCL: In *The Shobshob*, a guy actually pops open a live lizard with his bare
knees. I turned off the movie right after that and threw it in the garbage.
But the scene in *Renar Pinner* where the fat guy gets eaten by the macu-
lador is pretty gross too!

MOST GRATUITOUS NUDITY?

JB: Both *Renar Pinner* and *Paul-
tyrant* feature a lot of nudity for
its own sake — and make no men-
bake I'm really alright with that —
but if I had to narrow it down to
one scene, it would be Debbie Re-
dmon as the topless sign language
interpreter in *Citizen Kane*.

LCL: In *Toxic Avenger 2*, Toxie is
befriending a group of thugs on the
streets of Japan when a kendo-
catted woman is stripped down and
hit over the head with a hammer-
head shark, and then wanders in a
daze down the street where she



tells one the top of a TV news reporter. Maybe I was missing something in the limelight, but I never understood the nudity in the scene or why it just kept going and going and going.

BIGGEST LAUGH?

JBL: *Jenny Holmer* felt heavy, naked man with really small penis — temporarily blind due to a plaster cast being made of his face — runs through the streets of Manhattan knocking stuff over and outraging the bourgeoisie, eventually getting run over by an out-of-control car containing a serial killer and two psychotic working French film critics. The naked man's body opens. He shits himself. His head explodes. The car explodes. Basically, it's every *Troma* movie ever made, crammed into a two-minute scene.

LDL: In *Carneal*? The *Musical* there's a scene where a guy gets shot, poked through the eye with a pointed stick, has a meat cleaver sunk into his skull and a pick axe stuck into his chest... and he just won't fucking die!

FAVOURITE LINE?

JBL: We long to fully include here, but it's from *Postscript* — a part, possibly funny, remarking of Robert Shaw's famous US\$ Indianapolis speech from *Jaws*.

LDL: Lloyd Kaufman is Larry Benjamin, the blind director in *Jenny Holmer*. It's a horrible world! Starekian, dismemberment, torture rape, cars flying — it's horrible out there, but it's warm here in the movie as if we have finger — and stupidity!

GREATEST TAGLINE?

JBL: *Jenny Holmer*: "Let's make some art!"

LDL: *Killer Condom*: "The rubber that rubs you out!"



Endless Promises: Larry Strouff (*Rock Demol*) is transformed into the title character in *Sgt. Kabukiman N.Y.P.D.*, and lights come onstage he strikes *Lulu* (Susan Dey)

ways to go about it. Either you go totally on your own, with your heart and soul — which is the way I've pretty much done it — or you go as the hired gun. If you want to make a lot of money, you really need to go try to get to Hollywood and play that game and work your way up the food chain. If you want to be an actor or a director like *Triple B*, stay where you are and make your own damn movies!

Kaufman's devotion to the independent spirit, however, does have its limits — evidence that those limits have been exceeded can be found in *Troma's* own catalogue. The worst offender in Kaufman's opinion, is a film that the company distributed back in 1976: *Bloodsucking Hooker*.

"I don't like it," he admits. "I don't say it's gross but it's wrong. It doesn't mean we're not selling it, but I've come upon it today I would not be buying it and investing in it. *Bloodsucking Hooker* is misogynistic! It is a very funny movie but it also slaps over the line."

Who knew there was a line? Remember when *Johnny Depp* got thrown into a fire hydrant and tried desperately to return his brains to his head in *Jeepers and Juliet*? Or the reverse-dogmatic system implemented in

Postscript? Or the old penny who defecates violently after having her head run over with a car in *Chloe Smith*?

Still, Kaufman has earned respect for standing up to critics and remaining unapologetic for his studio's raunchy subject.

"We've always done stuff that like other people haven't done," he says, "and that's why we're still here and the other ones have either come and gone, or the few of them that made it big stuck to their guns."

It's clear that Kaufman can be as dogged as he is angry, and the perfect example is *Tromeo and Juliet*, its answer to *Troma's* indie cap, its answer to *Troma's* *Indie* Film Festival, which was originally conceived as a middle finger to the Hollywood critics of *Carneal*. As the story goes, *Troy Finkler* and *Mark Skow* paid *Sundance* to submit their first feature film in 1990, *Carneal* the *Musical*.

but the filmmakers never heard back from the fest, not even with a letter of rejection. Miffed, the *South Park* creators decided to put together their own film festival.

"They went to *Sundance* and they rented a place and they had a one-movie festival starring *Sundance*, the *Carneal* the *Musical* festival, and people loved it!" recalls Kaufman.



"The place was packed and it was a big success, so they suggested that we do a festival where you don't have to pay to submit the movie, you can see the movies for free, and no VIP policy. So we did [TronaDance] for two years in the same town and the same time as Sundance. It began as kind of a poke in the eye to the Sundance film festival."

Today, TronaDance still occurs at various around the world every January, screening independent movies with no entry fees for filmmakers and no admission costs for attendees.

What is perhaps most unusual about Trona's punk-rock philosophy toward filmmaking, however, is the fact that it's informed by an Ivy League education—both Kaufman and Herz studied at Yale. To his combined delight and dismay, Kaufman's three daughters attended such esteemed universities as Yale, Columbia and Harvard Business School, only to follow in their dad's footsteps.

"I told them, they've got to be miserable my entire 60-year career so it's certainly not my fault," he says. "There must be some gene in there, some misanthropic gene or underpraised effort gene at some sort."

Kaufman is quick to add that his son will have to make their own way in the biz and won't be working for him.

"They'll live in their own refrigerator cartons and hopefully they'll figure out how to make a living and be more misanthropic than their dad," he says.

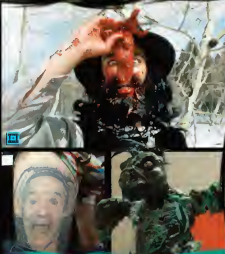
If the derided faves are any indication, Trona's struggles to stay afloat were well worth it. The studio's place in genre-film hearts is undisputed, just ask the filmmakers who approach Kaufman's booth at conventions to show him their Trona-themed feature.

"I see some and I see one as a few of them, too," he confesses. "I don't say a lot, but usually every convention I see one or two."

The studio's website has a whole album of Trona ink, including bits of studio mascot Toot, Sgt. Kobakowski and the Trona logo itself. But there's another reason for Trona's longevity, aside from its cult fanbase: its openness to change. The company has embraced the Internet age with a frequently updated website that boasts a wealth of info on Trona and Kaufman, with galleries of Trona-inspired fan art and an online store packed with DVDs, Blu-rays and other branded merch. Trona's YouTube channel is loaded with trailers, interviews and clips, and there's even a mobile app to take Trona with you.

Meanwhile, a remake of the *Time Dancer* is currently in production, and is set to be directed by Trona capitan Steve Pink (*Not Just a Time Machine*). And Kaufman himself is currently in post-production on *Adrian & Marla* (*Mr. Alpha* Vol. 2), a film he considers to be Trona's toughest adult to date.

"It's got special effects, it's got fight scenes, it's got transformations, it's got monsters, it's got on-



Headshot Movies. (Clockwise from top) Alfred Hitcher (Vip Perks) faces danger in *Condemn: The Musical*; a zombie character from *PhillyDead*; and Lloyd Kaufman gets under the skin of a fan

IF YOU WANT TO BE AN AUTEUR OR A DIRECTOR LIKE UNCLE LLOYDIE, STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND MAKE YOUR OWN DAMN MOVIES!

LLOYD KAUFMAN

screen musical numbers, it's got thousands of people and it's a huge project," he reveals. "The trained duck added just the right amount of stress—just enough to make it a nightmare!"

Kaufman reveals that there's also a Portuguese Trona feature on the way titled *Mutant Star* that will be led by Sonoma Motherfucker director Fernando Ale and will feature a giant homicidal rat monster with perpetually leaking nipples.

"[It's] slowly coagulating," he says. "I'm not filming it so it'll be good."

Kaufman also remains manically active in the genre scene, lecturing at master classes, hosting Tronafests at fan conventions and posing his

inimitable antics on Trona's YouTube channel. He's got a lot to say about his lengthy history of guerrilla filmmaking, and he says it through his ongoing book series, which includes *Make Your Own Damn Movie!*, *Direct Your Own Damn Movie!*, and *Produce Your Own Damn Movie!*.

Finally, to celebrate the studio's 40th birthday and to thank their passionate fanbase, Kaufman has posted 60 full-length Trona films on YouTube to be viewed and enjoyed for free.

"This is our 40th year and the only reason we still exist is because of our fans," he explains. "We'd, not just our fans, maybe a few of our collaborators have helped us."



AMERICA'S FAVORITE TEENAGERS SQUARE OFF AGAINST ELDER GODS
AND ZOMBIE HORDES IN AFTERLIFE WITH ARCHIE

HELL COMES TO RIVERDALE

BY APRIL SNEELINGS



DEATH HAS FINALLY COME FOR ARCHIE ANDREWS.

AFTER MORE THAN 70 YEARS OF HIGH-SCHOOL DANCES AND MALT SHOP DATES, 2014 WILL GO DOWN AS THE YEAR "AMERICA'S TYPICAL TEENAGER" COULDN'T ESCAPE THE GRIM REAPER. In the penultimate issue of *Life with Archie*, released in July 2014, an adult Archie was shot to death while protecting his friend, openly gay gay-control advocate Kevin Keller, from a would-be assassin. Meanwhile, in an alternate timeline, the teenage Archie and his pals have spent the entire year fending off ravenous hordes of zombies in *Afterlife with Archie*.

Accidental Archies, whose Endersmirk look is largely credited to original artist Bob Mortimer and its over-the-top vamp by forerunner group infatigable De Chino, made his first appearance in the December 1961 issue of a comic-book series called *Pop*—just two weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In the seven decades since, pop-culture touch-stones have been a fixture in the Archiverse. Archie and the Gang, including his two perennial love interests, Betty Cooper and Veronica Lodge, jettisoned their way through the 1940s, walked away the '50s in a collage of rock-'n'-roll and rock 'n' roll, and flitted with hippie counterculture in the '60s. Archie's proto-discoer best pal, Jughead Jones, briefly became the melonew-sporting parky-racker Captain Thrush in 1963, and publisher Archie Comics made headlines around the world in 2010 when it expanded its character lineup to include Kevin, Riverdale High's first openly gay student.

Like horror films, Archie's adventures have done much to define the culture of the American teenager—or, at least, our perception of that culture. It was probably only a matter of time, then, until the clumsy, toothy-faced geyser made his first foray into the world of gothic horror. According to *Archie* with Archie-writer and longtime Archie Comics fan Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Archie's world is a prime candidate for that most timely of horror trends: the zombie apocalypse.

"[It's] the fact that they're teen archetypes, I think, which play so well in horror movies," explains Aguirre-Sacasa, on why the Archiverse was ripe for the horror treatment. "Look at any teen slasher movie from the 1980s. There's the nice girl—usually she's the one who survives to the end. You have the mean girl, who's an early victim in the decaying, which is the Reggie character, the boy next door, who's usually the next-to-last victim. Horror is a genre for teenage; Archie and his friends are the ultimate teenagers. The combination really works."

Though its first issue hit stands in October 2013, *Archie* was announced from the other end of year earlier, when artist Francesco Francavilla graduated a zombie-themed variant cover for the 2012 *Halfway to the Life with Archie*. There weren't any notions in the comic itself, but Francavilla's

vintage-inspired cover struck a chord with Aguirre-Sacasa. A few hours after untheising about the cover to Archie Comics publisher Jon Goldwater, the writer was tasked with bringing the zombie apocalypse to the clean streets of Archie Andrews' all-American hometown, Riverdale.

Aguirre-Sacasa didn't have to look far to find ground zero for Riverdale's undead outbreak. The first story arc, "Escape from Riverdale," begins with a distraught Jughead making a late-night visit to teenage witch Sabrina Spellman. Jughead hides the bloodied body of his posch, Hot Dog, who's been hit by a car (which, we'll learn later, was driven by Riverdale's town jerkwad, Reggie Mantle). Desperate to help her grieving friend, Sabrina shields the Necronomicon from her witchy aunt and performs a forbidden, P.T. Barnum-inspired ritual over the corpse.

Soon, a zombified Hot Dog attacks and infects Jughead, who further spreads the plague when he shows up at a high-school dance and shows down on longtime admirer Ethel Muggs. Before long, the streets of Riverdale are overrun with zombies, and Archie and his living pals, including Betty, Veronica, Reggie and Moose Mason, barricade themselves inside the opulent Lodge mansion. Even that is a temporary solution, though, and the gang must eventually figure out a way to escape Riverdale.

"Once you get past Francavilla's stunning covers, the most striking thing about *Archie* is its tone," Aguirre-Sacasa is writing as unapologetically dark, dyed-in-the-blooded teen horror comic. The series is violent and identifiably grim, besides Jughead's death and subsequent resurrection, for example, Archie takes a baseball bat to the skull of his own reanimated father. Nothing in Archie's world is sacrosanct, the first arc of *Archie* saw Betty's parents hewed into

zombies, and the gang's limousine hijacked. Pop Tate's Chuckie Shoppes, art stores after the manner by fashion-retailers. It ends with Archie and his remaining buddies—not everyone who survives the trip to Lodge mansion makes it out alive—stomping their hometown in hopes of subverting the disaster writing.

"Everything is flexible, so long as the characters' cores are maintained," the writer says, of negotiating the twilight realm of Archie Comics' first full-fledged horror series. "That's just something that's individual, it varies—trial and error. Like, Archie would never kill his father. But he's a zombified father to death with a baseball bat? That's okay."

Aguirre-Sacasa is taking a similarly loose approach to the oversaturated zombie-apocalypse subgenre. Though *Archie*'s first story arc assumed the basic shape of apocalypses such as *Night of the Living Dead* and *The Walking Dead*—the plague is spread through bites, characters hole up in a fortified location, only to be undone by infighting and internal politics—the writer isn't holding himself to rules that have already been laid out by everyone from George A. Romero to Robert Kirkman.

"The only thing I really stick to as gospel is the first—and, to my mind, most important—decision





that I made about the zombie, which is that they would be supernatural zombies instead of science-created zombies," he says. "Which is, I guess, the difference between the zombies in *Night of the Living Dead* and the zombies in *The Evil Dead*. [It's] the difference between the zombie apocalypse starting with one of Sabrina's spells backfiring, and it starting because one of [Riverdale High's resident geeks] Dillon Dooley's science experiments went awry."

As you might guess, *Afflicted* also includes well-to-well horror references that attest to Aquino-

Sacasa's genuine enthusiasm for the genre. (His credits also include scripting the recent big-screen revamps of *Carrie* and *The Thing* that Orson Welles [deadpan]) One scene has characters engaging in a sardonic, Stream-of-consciousness zombie-horror sequel, a few issues later, Sabrina and her boyfriend attend a screening of *The Killer Man*, whose themes will later be echoed in Sabrina's storyline. Besides promoting the series in a world where pop culture is defined by horror movies, the endless stream of genre references also serves to tie together several seemingly disparate horror mythologies—for instance, casting the zombie outbreak as a Lovecraftian curse.

"It was a little bit of the 'go big or go home' mentality," says Aquino-Sacasa. "We've done slash-ups before—Archie *Murks* the Publisher, for instance—but we've always pulled our punches. In this case, we didn't want people to read the first issue and say, 'I knew it! I knew this wasn't a real horror comic!' Also, when you have a horror master like Francisco Franciscella drawing your book, you don't want to give him something that's too 'safe' to draw, you know? You want to give him the two-page spread of Chibiuku going after Sabrina the

"Savage Witch."

The writer is referring to the events of *Afflicted* #6, a one-shot that focuses on the repercussions faced by Sabrina Spellman after she accidentally causes Riverdale's entire populace, in an issue that kicks off the previously titled "Betty R.I.P." story arc, Sabrina finds herself in a mental institution run by Dr. Lovcraft and his colleague, Dr. Macbeth. The issue features one cosmic-horror reference after the next, including nods to "The Shadow over Innsmouth," "Pickman's Model" and other classic Lovecraft stories.

"That was something we'd been planning to do since the first issue, which is why Satanism steals the Micromaniacs from her aunt," Aquino-Sacasa allows. "Francisco and I are huge Lovecraft fans, so we knew we were inevitably going to [do] an all-Lovecraft issue, and Sabrina, given her background, seemed the logical way to connect those two uniquely American mythologies."

Surprisingly, Aquino-Sacasa says he's encountered no resistance so far from Archie Comics brass, in spite of the book's graphic violence and overtly sexual underpinnings (in *Afflicted*, Archie's good-girl pals Nancy Woods and Ginger Lopez are having a secret affair, while the already sexed-up Cheryl Blossom is getting it on with her twin brother, Jason, in a *Riverdale* in the *AHS*-inspired subplot). Rather, he's been given more or less free rein in carving out Riverdale's bloody new niche in the world of horror comics.

"Jon Goldwater, who's Archie's pub-

lisher, was there when the initial idea for this book came together and has been the book's biggest cheerleader ever since," he points out. "I think there have been some internal discussions at Archie [Comics]—like, 'Is this going too far?'—but Francisco and I have been shielded from those."

As of now, there's no roadmap in sight for *Afflicted* with Archie, or its most alternate-continuity spinoff, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (a supernatural horror yarn set in the 1950s, scripted by Aquino-Sacasa and drawn by Robert Mack). The writer says he's already planned out the first eight episodes of *Afflicted*; the current "Betty R.I.P." storyline will be followed by an arc called "Archie Is Legend." He's also tossed a Christmas issue inspired by both *A Christmas Carol* and *The Shining*.

The plan, he says, is for these Archie Comics horror series, which take place in a continuity that is entirely removed from traditional Archie #666, such as *Betty and Veronica Comics Digest* and *Archie in Fearful Christmas Comics*, to go on indefinitely—as long as he and the artists can produce comics that stand out from the glut of horror titles that are crowding comic-store shelves.

"We try to make sure that every issue works in an Archie story as well as a zombie story," Aquino-Sacasa explains. "That's why the first issue is set against the backdrop of the high school's Halloween dance. That's why there's a party plot in the third issue. That's why the [Archie/Betty/Veronica] love triangle is still beat-and-continue. That, to me, is the thing that most sets it apart from other zombie properties: our active, aggressive engagement with the Archie tropes and iconography."



THIRTY YEARS AFTER IT CRAWLED OUT OF THE
SEWERS, DIRECTOR DOUGLAS CHEEK
REMEMBERS C.H.U.D., HIS CULT CLASSIC

CHEWERS IN THE SEWERS

by
MICHAEL DOYLE



NEW YORK CITY HAS YIELDED ITS FAIR SHARE OF URBAN LEGENDS—NONE MORE ENDURING THAN ITS TALES OF ALLIGATORS LURKING IN SEWERS.

However, if you've watched a lot of movies and television in recent years, you may be inclined to believe that something far more heinous resides in those gloomy subterranean passages... C.H.U.D.!

An orphan for Cosmopolitan Humiliated Underground Dwellers (or Contaminated Hazard Urban Disposal), C.H.U.D. tells the story of a photojournalist (John Heard), a soap-bottle preacher (David Stern) and a grieving dad (Christopher Curry) who discover a government conspiracy involving radioactive material being dumped in the city's sewers. The toxic waste is transforming the denizens who live underground into carnivorous mutants. No longer content to dine on any stray citizens who wander too close to their habitats, these beasts are now venturing above ground to take a bite

out of The Big Apple.

A legendary low-budget monstrosity, C.H.U.D. is greatly enhanced by its sly wit, atmospheric locations and distinguished cast (Heard, Stern and Curry were all close friends of director Douglas Cheek). This modest creature feature can also lay claim to having had a considerable cultural impact: It's been directly alluded to in films such as *Ghostbusters II* and *Downer Davis*, and TV shows including *Archer*, *Gothic*, *Pushing Daisies*, *Robot Chicken*, *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*, *Futurama* and *The Simpsons* (where it's been referenced no less than four times!).

To honor C.H.U.D. on its 30th anniversary, *Roe* Magazine tracked down the Mogger tracked down the elusive Cheek to sunny California, where he's been enjoying retirement, to discuss his one and only directorial offering.



What were the circumstances that led you to make *C.H.U.D.*?

The opportunity arose because a friend of mine, Jeffrey Shep-Robert, came up with the script. It's a story about strange humanoid creatures living beneath the city. Shep and I went mostly into New York City and were both excited by the underground life that went on in the subway and subterranean areas. At the time, there had been an article in the newspaper about homeless construction living down there—not in the sewers of course, but in the various underground places—and it was fascinating stuff. Very often you would find men and women sleeping down in the corridors of the subway system. We took that reality and ran with it, suggesting that these unfortunate people had somehow mutated into horrible monsters.

What can you tell me about the creation of the *C.H.U.D.* monsters?

The monsters were originally going to be much more human-looking than what we ended up with in the finished film. I wanted them to move very tight—to run, leap and jump around—and to have highly athletic, dangerous postures. Instead, what we got were big, lumbering, rubber monsters that could hardly move except for the long necks that would stand out for no reason. All the *C.H.U.D.* really needed were glowing eyes and sharp teeth, not elongated heads. They should have looked more recognizably human and gone the rubber monster route: incident we encountered several problems during shooting. Firstly, the actors playing the creatures had to wear chains with oxygen tanks so they couldn't breathe while making the masks. They were so dropped by the amount of rubber surrounding them, they couldn't move. It was the complete opposite of what I had wanted.

Why didn't you get what you wanted?

I had some difficulties with my producer, Andrew Berman, as we both had very different wants for *C.H.U.D.* Andy wanted to be involved with the process and I insisted that if he was preoccupied with doing the music that it would give me a lot more freedom to make my film. So I said, "Okay, go ahead and design these creatures because I know you are really into this stuff." That got him out of my way for a while and gave me a little more room to maneuver as a director. Unfortunately, the result of that decision was we ended up with those weird rubber monsters that were practically immobile. By that time, it was too late to do anything about it.

Before embarking on *C.H.U.D.*, did you feel you had a good grasp of the cinematic mechanics required to scare an audience?

I did, but I've never been a real horror film buff. My approach to creating a scary atmosphere involved developing the sounds of the underground—the echoing, hollow sounds of those subterranean chambers. I wanted *C.H.U.D.* to have this consistency and feeling on the soundtrack each time



Dark Sights: *C.H.U.D.* (Jim Carrey) gets a close call of *C.H.U.D.* close to the viewer; the *C.H.U.D.* that were played by Loren Wolkoff, and one of the Cinematheque Museum Underground Dwellers in the flesh

the chambers mutated down into the darkness. I was a picture editor before I was a director, and had also done a lot of my own sound editing, which was very helpful. Naturally, the underground locations we used in *C.H.U.D.* were very atmospheric and authentic places. We did a lot of work down there—shooting in places nobody had ever shot before. They were difficult locations to deal with, but shooting in the real environment made all the difference. It gave *C.H.U.D.* this genuinely creepy mood.

Were you attempting any social commentary with *C.H.U.D.*, in regards to environmental issues, or the homelessness and poverty found in America?

No, we didn't have any social or political agenda whatsoever. In fact, when Shep and I came up with the idea for *C.H.U.D.*, it was intended to be a laugh. I mean, we always wanted the movie to be frightening, but it was such a preposterous concept it couldn't be taken entirely seriously. When Andy Berman took over the editing of *C.H.U.D.* after I'd delivered my director's cut, I think he emphasized more of a serious tone and we lost some of the crazy humor.

Why didn't you ever direct another film?

Well, since *C.H.U.D.* was released and my name was out there, I did try for a while. But I found going to various meetings and attempting to sell myself and my ideas to producers very draining. I didn't enjoy that part of the job at all and I soon backed away from it. There was just too much bullshit to deal with and so I pretty much stayed out of the

business after *C.H.U.D.* Occasionally, over the years, I've helped other people out with their projects, but I haven't directed another movie.

What did you make of the famous 1988 sequel, *C.H.U.D. II: Bud the Chud*?

I've never seen it.

Are you aware that *C.H.U.D.* has inspired celebrity fans, including actor Robert Downey Jr. and rock star Dave Grohl?

I know that Robert Downey Jr. is a big fan of the movie, but I didn't know about the rock star. The interesting thing about *C.H.U.D.* is that it still hasn't died away after all these years. It has continued to survive and I'm incredibly proud of that. This movie didn't do particularly great at the time of its release, but it's enjoyed a very long afterlife. I mean, there aren't too many people out there who haven't heard of it.

Maybe that's because *C.H.U.D.* has been referenced in countless movies and TV shows, most famously in *The Simpsons*, when Homer reveals he once encountered "home *C.H.U.D.s*" on his first visit to New York.

Yeah, that's wonderful! [Laughs] I think the title itself, *C.H.U.D.*, evokes so many specific images, meanings and moods—dark places and scary monsters—it becomes recognizable. The idea of these creepy creatures lurking beneath our streets continues to fascinate and disturb people. It's not too shocking to think that my little film continues to have such a big impact but, hey, I filmed completely!

MEMENTO MORGUE

Photos by Denis Alexander, Vanessa Furbado and Adria Wood



1-10 Costume contest winner Jay Nash as Beetlejuice. **Vibe** Morgue editor-in-chief Dave Alexander co-hosting the contest with Tom Savini. **Nash** right and **RM** president Rodrigo Guadalupe



1-10 **RM** masthead editor Aaron Lopez interviews **RM**'s *An American Werewolf in London* cover illustration Tom Savini interviews costume contest winners, including Chris DeBurka as another Beetlejuice, and **RM** writer Phil Brown as the Penguin



1-10 Jen Wright as the Best Doge painting of legend Phil in *The Vampires Lovers* with **RM** copy editor Andrea Salasch as Medusa, Gary and Nicole Pavia as the *Baraback* in *The Babadook*. **RM** writer Sean Plummer proposes onstage to his girlfriend Marissa Hall, and party co-ordinator James Jesus Moggiot with **RM** art director Andrew Wright and a replica version of **RM** designer Vanessa Furbado

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CINEMACORE

FILM + DVD + REISSUES

SHOULDA BEEN UNMADE

DRACULA UNTOLD

Starring Luke Evans, Dominic Cooper and Sarah Gadon
Directed by Gary Shore
Written by Matt Sacks and Rob Marshall
Universal

Every few years, the folks at Universal try to make a few bucks by dusting off their line-up of classic movie monsters and slapping them back on the big screen. Back in 2004 they tried it with the lamestrella Van Helsing, 2010 saw the reimagining of *The Wolfman* and even old flut-top was rebooted earlier this year in *J. Frankenstein*.

The problem is that most of these stories have been done to death, and it's become exceedingly hard to create new properties around them unless you shoot them off into space, set them in a contemporary time period, or re-invent them from scratch. And that's exactly what first-time feature director Gary Shore decided to do, as he spins a tale about a benevolent Transylvanian Prince who's forced to become a vampire in order to save his kingdom.

Welsh actor Luke Evans (*Immortals*, *The Abolition of Man*) plays Prince, who's forced to

role but his peculiar accent and constant state of emotional torture grow wearisome quickly. His wife, Mircsa, is played competently by Sarah Gadon (*Antonia*, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*), but her affected British accent and raspy demeanor are equal parts annoying and distracting. The real star of the show is master thespian Charles Dance (*Alfred*, *State of Mind*), who steals every scene he's in as a writhed ancient vampire.



but do PG rating means no nudity and almost no blood—something that's almost unforgivable in a vampire movie. This particular *Dracula* tale is definitely better left both untold and unseen.

LAST CHANCE LANCE

LET THE WRONG ONE IN

THE GUEST

Starring Ben Stiller, Milla Jovovich and Brendan Meyer
Directed by Adam Wingard
Written by Simon Barrett
Icon/Picturehouse

Few writer/director teams appear to be having more fun right now than Simon Barrett and Adam Wingard. The duo delighted genre fans and critics alike in 2011 with the wildly funny horror thriller-slasher *Kill List*, and they've since produced some equally grisly shorts for the anthology films *WHS 2* and *The ABCs of Death*. The duo's next feature is their latest full-length effort, and while it never reaches the gleefully mad-scientist heights of *Kill List*, it's still a sleek and entertaining slice of thriller cinema.

Set in an unnamed New Mexico town, *The Guest* introduces us to the Patterson family: parents Spencer (Leland Orser) and Laura (Shirley Kollins), and kids Anna (Milla Jovovich) and Luke (Brendan Meyer). They're struggling with the loss of their oldest son, Caleb, who died while serving in Afghanistan. One morning, a tall blond stranger appears on their doorstep and introduces himself as David (Downtown Abbey's Ben Stiller), a recently discharged soldier who was part of Caleb's squad. He says he's fulfilling a promise he made to his fallen comrade to look after his family after his death.

Laura welcomes David to stay at the house for a few days, and while the soldier's presence is



greeted with initial suspicion by the rest of the clan, he quickly ingratiates himself, drinking beers with Spencer, helping Laura with the chores, smoking joints with Anna as parties end, most pertinently, encouraging the family's youngest son, Luke, to stand up to some bullies with surprisingly violent results. Even casual viewers will soon be able to guess that this charming all-American fellow isn't who he says he is. It's during this period of discovery where the film switches gears, and the slow-burning suspense gives way to full-on action-horror, with guns blazing, bodies flying and explosions of gore.

The premise of *The Guest* doesn't exactly re-invent the wheel, but swift pacing and great performances make up for the predictability of the plot. Stevens is an effective villain, slipping easily between gallant glow of boy and stoic-faced killer. There's also some nice moments of smart casting, including The Wire's Lance Reddick as a military police agent, while Ethan Embry (*Champagne*) shows up in a brief, memorable turn as a grumpy arms dealer.

Wingard's violent flair also elevates the film above mere schlock. The climax—a tense chase set in a high school haunted house—could be considered rote, but its oil-painting style, neon lights and dry ice, and trills more like a loving homage to classic '80s fright-

films like *Macabre Cop* and *Angie's Ashes*. The '80s compans also extend to *The Guest*'s offbeat soundtrack, featuring original and new synth compositions that are used particularly well during the film's breakneck final third, which effectively turns into a slasher movie.

Unfortunately, the movie ends with a twist

that's neither surprising nor effective, which is a bit of a bummer, given that Wingard and Barrett can do better. Up to a point, *The Guest* is a fun and diverting ride.

ALISON LANG

SPIRIT BORED

OUIJA

Starring Olivia Cooke, Alex Cora and Lin Shaye
Directed by Stiles White
Written by Juliet Snowden and Stiles White
Universal

Some kids like their toast bland. Stuff like spaghetti without sauce, white bread with butter, mild chicken—all processed shit with little nutrition. Offer up a carrot or an apple and their faces screw up in disgust. *Ouija*, similarly, is about as bland as studio horror movies get, with jump scares in place of tension and lifeless dialogue spoken by pretty actors whose characters lack a character. Of course, lots of people like bland, as evidenced by *Ouija* tapping the American Halloween box office.

Bella Mabe's Olivia Cooke stars as Laine, a young woman whose best friend seems to have committed suicide. Asked to house sit for the grieving family, Laine finds the Gage board and her bestie played with its kids. When Laine and some friends use the board, they come into contact with the unexplained spirit of a previous tenant's daughter. Laine investigates the house's history as her friends are murdered one by one by the evil force stirred up by the board. Is it the same supernatural creature that prompted Laine's friend to bang her self? The answer to that question is not "yes" or "no" but "who cares?"

Ouija was conceived as a big feature-action hit in to Heuber's Gage board. It was subsequently re-tooled (without Heuber) as a low-budget offering from Jason Blum's Blumhouse Productions. Blum is just one of eleven producers on this aberration. The result of so many cooks in the kitchen is a cinematic meal about as exciting as plain porridge.

First-time director Stiles White and co-writer Juliet Snowden (they co-wrote a draft of *Alien* Proper) retool and re-tool the world film *Ouija*.

fail to craft a single interesting character. Even games vet Lin Shaye (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Asylum*) brings little impression playing a mental patient with a sinister agenda. The rest of the cast is adequate, and adequate is all that was apparently required to get this movie made.

Sometime pass the salt. This overcooked turkey needs it.

SEAN PLUMMER

UNLUCKY CHARMS

LEPRECHAUN: ORIGINS

Starring Stephanie Bernini, Andrew Dunbar
and Dylan Postl
Directed by Zach Lipovsky
Written by Harris Wikström
Lionsgate

As far as horror franchises go, *Leprechaun* is in a league of its own, with its unique blend of slapstick comedy slasher convention and a wackadood little villain with more quips and one-liners than you can shake a shamrock at. Over the years, the decade have descended deeper and deeper into absurdity (and even into the far reaches of outer space), but a two-picture reboot deal with WWE Studios promises to take the blithering gold-loving gnomes out of the 'hood and back to his humble beginnings in a *Leprechaun* reboot is what we'd like to see granted?

The film opens on a familiar scenario: four recent grads are backpacking through Ireland, thereby for all the world, the land has to offer Sophie (Stephanie Bernini) is something of a history buff, so when a village resident at the local watering hole offers to let them stay at his cabin, located near some archaic, they take him up on it. Upon arrival, however, they find themselves locked in and menaced by a small but violent creature hellbent on tearing them to shreds.

It turns out that, many moons ago, the town's ancestors stole gold from a leprechaun (Dylan Postl, better known as WWE personality Hornswoggle) and have taken to sacrificing Western tourists to appease the vengeful creature's bloodthirsty overness. It's up to Sophie and her friends to satisfy the greedy little imp and put an end to the nasty arrangement.

That WWE would replace Warwick Davis' lovable leprechaun with Hornswoggle is a rather sad is unfortunate given that Davis' antics were largely responsible for the franchise's cult following. Postl's expressionless leprechaun is more like an Irish chupacabra, whose increase is limited to his sharp claws and muffled moans. The leads turn out decent performances and a thin conflict subplot between Sophie and her jerk of a boyfriend Ben (Andrew Dunbar) keep



things moving along, but the film is so rote that you can foresee the twist at the end rainbow. There's some decent gore and you might get a kick out of this flick if you're into the whole 'bawds-like-a-wrong-lam trope, but for myself, I'm thinking my lucky charms that there'll only be one more.

ANDREA SUBIRAN

EXORVENTION

INNER DEMONS

Starring Lora Rabinowitz, Morgan MacDelmont and Ashley Tatters
Directed by Seth Grossman
Written by Glenn Gore
RNC Midnight

Inner Demons is another found footage possession film, but that we'll tread concert could still work with some inspired writing. It's not the case, however...

In it, a novice cameraman (Morgan MacDelmont) is hired by Craigslist to work on an infomercial-type reality show. Since the producers don't consider him pro, they don't believe his claims that one of the show's subjects is under demonic influence. Said subject is Carson (Lara Rabinowitz), a former straight-A student who claims to take hard drugs to medicate her habit of being used as a conduit for an evil spirit.

If you guessed that Carson does little more than converse and scream, give yourself a cookie. The film's script is stylized with dialogue such as, "I

downloaded some exorcism stuff off the internet," *Inner Demons* is bound to leave you feeling embarrassed for all involved.

Writer Glenn Gore tries to shake things up by adding the standard possession narrative to the equally clichéd narrative of reality shows about drug addicts. This combination doesn't fashion either of those usually old story lines because there's no thought that word is to how frightening it would be to have evil hidden in plain sight among highly vulnerable addicts. And, like the overused Evil Dead remake, *Inner Demons* loses out what could be seen a neat angle for a horror flick: withdrawn as seen through the eyes of someone who merely be lives in demons and hallucinations their every "attack." Well, they could've even taken a stab at the very producers of *Ghost Hunter*-type shows present otherwise unworkable footage of said houses into terrifying speakshows with closer editing.

Director Seth Grossman has made a film that's inter changeable with the recent crop of found footage horror such as *Resident Evil: Afterlife* or *The Last Exorcism*. The film attempts to add a twist on the formula without completely abandoning the trappings of the subgenre, but this way short with its unimpaired mix of Exorcist and Intervention. To quote another program about drug abuse, "Just say no!"

ADAM CLAFKIE



OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE PUTS THE "D" IN "HOLKIDIE"

CLAUD 2.0

INFINITE SANTA 8000

Midnight Releasing

Ify parents told you that Santa Claus brought toys to good girls and boys, while the bad ones got a lump of coal. And yes, as a child, I received enough coal to treat a small town for a decade. I wish that instead that they had told me the story of *Infinite Santa 8000*. The animated movie itself is an apocalypse world populated by mutants and robots, where the few remaining humans must kill to survive. Santa, who now sports gleamy cybernetic implants, has relocated his workshop to an abandoned mall in the desert and fights cyborgs in gladiatorial arenas for sticks of coal. You'll get to see Santa and his sidekick under a gigantic electronic Easter bunny-bong box, making this blood-soaked flick an instant holiday classic.

BODY COUNT: 100

SANTA'S BEST WEAPON: Double-Serrated Flame-Throter

PUSHED TO THE BRINK

CAESAR & OTTO'S DEADLY XMAS

MVD Visual

What if instead of giving you a lump of coal for being bad, your parents told Santa to deliver you with a Christmas? That's the premise of the latest Caesar & Otto movie, in which our luckless protagonists have convinced their employers to let them to make a killer Santa movie. Problem is, Caesar was traumatized by a Christmas wedding Santa as a kid and there's already a killer Santa out there chopping up their friends and trying to finish them. Conny and campy, *Deadly Christmas* is as loaded with pop as it is with B-movie gore, watch it to the end for a climax saved by Maxine Davis Robert 23rd.

BODY COUNT: 10

SANTA'S BEST WEAPON: Chainsaw

A KICK IN THE CHESTNUTS

BLOODY CHRISTMAS

MVD Visual

What do real Santas do in the off-season? Go to the racetrack? Stuff candy canes down slippers' trunks? How about go on a killing spree? That's what the protagonist of *Bloody Christmas* does after being fired as a Public Access TV Santa. But just as he's about to put his nefarious plan into action he crosses paths with a hormonal priest intent on cleansing the city of sinners. The two of them end up battling each other to the death in a scene that's way funnier than it was probably meant to be. *Bloody Christmas* could have worked much better as a short because as a feature it suffers from mewing dialogue, murky sound, awful lighting and some unforgivable continuity and script problems. Ho-Ho-Horror!

BODY COUNT: 10

SANTA'S BEST WEAPON: A Hard Grenade

LAST CHANCE LANCE

REISSUES



OWL ON THE PROWL

STAGE FRIGHT (1987) *TV-14*

Starring David Duchovny, Barbara Capaldi, and Giovanni Lombardo-Nadico
Written by George Garmston and Shelia Goldberg
Directed by Michele Scafe
Blue Underground

In 1987, the Italian giallo was pretty much dead. Sidelined by its American bastard child, the slasher film, whose own cycle was already mired by absurdities, the once-mighty murder mysteries had fallen to the very gutter they had previously managed to transcend. Enter Michele Scafe's *Stage Fright*, a film that somehow managed to perch high atop the subgenre's flaccid entree while still infusing it with any badassery doing so.

In it, a theater troupe, rehearsing for a play about a serial killer, tells prey to the real thing: an owl-masked, see-sawing maniac named Irving Wallace (Alan Parker). After Wallace escapes from an institution for the criminally insane (conveniently located a short walking distance from the theater), the troupe discovers his first

victim on the ground with a pickaxe in her mouth. The show's protean director (David Brandt) soon enquires in a homicide gambit by altering the identity of the show's killer to that of Wallace. Bad move. Wallace begins picking off the cast and crew in a variety of gruesome ways involving such weapons as a spring, boxing knif, power drill, the aforementioned axe and a chainsaw, employed in a series of stunning set pieces that would be at home in the local grasseins and graphic of giallo. Even Italy's favorite punching bag, Giovanni Lombardo-Nadico (known for playing the first character killed in several giallo, has a role as the show's killer and is dispatched by his comrades in a case of mistaken identity.

Though *Stage Fright* couldn't save the giallo from its death by a thousand overseas tropes, it did put director Michele Scafe on the horror map. Previously an assistant to the likes of Dario Argento and Joe D'Amato (the film's producer), Scafe would go on to assist Terry Gilliam on the epic *The Adventures of Baron*

Munchausen (1988) before helming his own films *The Church* (1989), the sequel *La Sette* (1991) and *Guercy Mo* (1994), followed by a long career in the Italian TV industry. All of this is



covered in Blue Underground's new Blu-ray, which includes interviews with Scafe, Nadico, music composer Simon Bowdell, and makeup effects artist Paolo Trogolo. A solid dose for giallo and general horror fans alike.

TAL ZIEMMAN

SPIDER-FACE, SPIDER-FACE

THE BELIEVERS (1987) *TV-14*

Starring Martin Shaw, Helen Shaver and Robert Luggie
Directed by John Schlesinger
Written by Mark Frost
Twilight Time

There are many occult thrillers, but only one features spiders crawling out of a rot in Helen Shaver's face, and that film is *The Believers*.

Directed by John Schlesinger (Manhattan Man, Pacific Heights), based on the novel *The Religion* by Nicholas Sanders, and adapted by a pre-*Twin Peaks* Mark Frost, *The Believers* concerns police psychiatrist Cal (Martin Shaw), who relocates with son Chris to his old mad school stomping ground in New York City after his wife is electrocuted in a freak kitchen accident. Cal's new home comes with caregiver Carmen (Celia Penz), recommended by their landlady to be his new informant (Shaver), but the family helper falls out of favor after peering Chris' room with Sandra's paraphernalia and spiritual offerings.

It isn't long before Cal discovers that a cult wants to sacrifice Chris to a high-level priest (Malick Bowden) can gain power, although what that power actually entails is kept vague in Frost's rather perfunctory dialogue. It's best to view *The Believers* as a classic Hammer-style thriller, in which the focus is on the battle of good versus evil. That said, the film could have easily been larded with bad stunt effects, but the Sanders religion and its practitioners aren't tarnished, as it's clear that the killings stem from an irrational spin-off cult unbridled and propagated by mostly bankrupt white folk.

The film's cops are quite stereotypical, though, a frazzled Robert Luggie tries to identify Cal, Trogator beyond a grumpy-pants confab, and Jimmy Serila is a bit too physically broad as the paranoid, rogue detective.

But then there's that pre-digital cut of Scafe which is near-impossible to watch without cringing, real spiders burst out of, and run across, Shaver's face. One can only imagine what it felt like to shoot the scene — alas, there's no commentary to fill us in on Twilight Time's release (limited to 3000 copies).

This is a slick, beautifully shot and scored film (J. Peter Robinson's understated music appears



an an isolated alien track), plus *Persepolis* will be amused to see their City Hall doubling as a NYC community center, and the newly discovered Moon God/Goddess Gaius doubling as an after hours out-lying center. The *Delivers* come its reputation as an atmospheric, gloomy, and deliciously trashy shocker.

MARK E. HANSEN

NOT RODS OF THE GODS

IN SEARCH OF ANCIENT MYSTERIES (1973) ^{PG}

Starring Rod Taylor, José Bressan
and Duncan A. Lauder
Written and directed by Fred Fendley
Film Club

Back in 1973, when filmmaking was in its shaggy-haired adolescence, the documentary format was expanding means by casting its lens on the less bookishly academic (read accepted) and into the far reaches of alternative theory. Enter Erich von Däniken, whose 1968 book *Chariots of the Gods?* became an enormous hit with hippy intellectuals open to new ideas — so much so that it was brought to screens in 1970. Von Däniken's premise — that ancient civilizations show proof of alien visitation — was an intriguing niche of Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos and UFO lore that was roundly dismissed by the scientific community in the ensuing years.

Producer Alan Landburg was caught up in the swirl of excitement for these ideas, and launched three one-hour-long television docs that essentially expanded on von Däniken's theories. These were: *In Search of Ancient Mysteries* (1973), *The Dollar Space Connection* (1973), all of which were quite successful and would kick off *In Search Of...* (1977-1982), a TV series that any self-respecting reader at this magazine ought to be familiar with.

Floundering *In Search of Ancient Mysteries*, it seems little more than a greatest hits compendium of recent extraterrestrial theory. Rod Taylor testifies in a sober, measured tone as he documents "evidence" of ancient sightings wearing space helmets, and apocryphal Mycenaean prophecies suggesting the aliens will return in the future. He is joined by a few others, notably José Bressan, a NASA engineer who argues that the prophet Ezekiel's visions from the Old Testament actually describe a modern spaceship. After a flap-over at the infamous Moon phase, we head out to the Bermuda Triangle (supposed to be a portal to outer space), and then back to the origin of life itself — all in 53 minutes!

This DVD is as bare bones as it gets, with a menu that may well have been made on a store



computer. The transfer preserves the moon sound and 16mm glory of the footage, which works reasonably in its favor, giving the show a weird, unsettling, retro quality.

If you have a sweet spot for the unexplained, we heartily recommend five years of *In Search Of...*, which explored the mysterious universe beyond the ancient astronaut theory. *In Search of Ancient Mysteries*, alas, is far complicated only.

DEROTT BLACK

MOON MEN

DOCTOR MORDRID (1992) ^{PG}

Starring Jeffrey Combs, Brian Thompson and Yvette Nipon
Directed by Charles Band and Albert Band
Written by Charles Band and C. Courtney Jones
Full Moon Features

When you make as many movies as Charles Band has, you're gonna get some dryer lint with the proverbial laundry pile. Come in part 1: 1992 sci-fi actioner *Doctor Mordrid*. It's certainly not the first (or second, third or fourth) film that springs to mind when discussing Band's career, but that doesn't mean it's not fun.

The plot goes a little something like this: Interdimensional bad dude Kabal (whoever '80s character villain Brian Thompson) is on a mission to collect elements which he uses for fuel in his plot to unleash evil upon the Earth and enslave humanity. His nemesis, the suave wisard Dr. Mordrid (Jeffrey Combs in a refreshingly subdued role) must stop Kabal, put an

end to his tyrannical scheme and do right by the cosmic forces that guide his journey. Through inter-galactic trips to the cosmos and time spent in jail, Mordrid, alongside his accidental sidekick Samantha (TV actress Yvette Nipon) hunts Kabal and wages what is an unrelenting but effective battle with the wicked, saving the day and all of humanity with it.

Though *Doctor Mordrid* is typical of the Full Moon style of budget outgunning concept, there's

never a dull moment. Combs plays the lead with restraint, Thompson goes the other way, imbuing Kabal with cartoonish menace, and occasional moments featuring stop-motion animation (including a skeletal battle between a T-rex and a megalodon in a museum) are certain to make anyone nostalgic for the pre-*CGI* era. Sure, not everything *Mordrid* offers can escape over the most forgiving fans of psychedelics; some of the film's sets and props seem cheap and weightless, and a few supporting cast members (I'm looking at you, evil punk rock minnow) appear as though they were hired as a favour to their concerned parents, but hey, this is a Full Moon movie. At least there are no talking cookies.

The new Full Moon Blu-ray comes with some decent extras, like new audio commentary by Band and Combs about the show (but is unfortunately the stuff of hardcore completists. Fun? Sure. Essential? Not in a million Earth years.

TAL ZEMERMAN



THE LATE-NITE ARCHIVE

FIVE *Double Duty*

by Paul Conroy

Two roles are better than one, especially when it comes to the iconic Barbara Steele. Not long after her star appearance in the Gothic thriller *Castle of the Living Dead* (1964), she teamed with director Antonio Margheri for *The Long Hair of Death* (1964). This medieval-era follow-up, bristling with suggestions of witchcraft and spooky, crumbling crypts, clearly harkens back to Maria Bava's *Black Sunday* (1960), only with a stronger focus on the role of twins and doppelgängers as agents of terror.

Doubling, reflections, changelings and other literary techniques have been a mainstay of horror since the very beginnings of the genre. Typified by the split personality of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, this theme more often manifests as twins: one good, one evil. Margheri's film, out this month on Blu-ray from Bantam-coll speculator Riverside, doesn't feature literal twins but, like *Black Sunday*, it does feature Steele in a dual role in an attempt to duplicate the on-screen honor of Bava's infamous diabolic.

In the film, evil aristocrat Count Heriberto (Giuliano Raffaelli) orders Adele, a selected witch, to be burned at the stake, ignoring the protestations of her daughter, Helen (Steele). As the flames rise, the woman curses Heriberto's bloodline, damning them to a legacy of plagues and murder. Realizing she knows too much, the Count later tosses Helen off a cliff to her death, and helps control Helen's sister Elizabeth (Elvira Ziskovska) to marry Kurt (George Ardisson), his equally despicable son. Adele's curse soon comes to pass, as the land is ravaged by a disease that puts the local peasants on the edge of revolt while, inside the castle, Elizabeth prays for deliverance from her immoral husband. But when a strangely familiar woman, Mary (Steele) appears at the gates, Kurt hatches a plan to do it: Elizabeth and take up with his early beautiful new guest.

In films such as *Verdige* (1958), *Tales of Evil* (1970), *Sisters* (1973), *Dead Ringers* (1988) and



Army of Darkness (1992), horror is rife with the reflections and reproductions that Margheri employs here. Not only do these kinds of cinematic tropes play on fears of self-fragmentation and loss of identity, they also show the frightening power of making the familiar suddenly unknowable, such as the emotionless and inscrutable alien doubles that *Impassable* burnish in films such as invaders from Mars (1953) and *Journey to the Edge of Darkness* (1956).

The Long Hair of Death takes some of the central ideas of doubling that *Black Sunday* plays with and feeds them up to a farmhouse mirror. The incidence of doubling and reflections are increased and internalized to overwhelming (if less than *Black Sunday*) effect.

The Long Hair of Death's revenge plot is intricately tied to its appearances of twin-like doubles. Mary's arrival at the castle gates reveals her-sister to Maria—as a resurrected doppelgänger of Helen—out to exact Adele's curse. But she's also Elizabeth's virtual twin (right down to her long dark hair), an evil double returned to life to carry out the deeds that Elizabeth is unable to. This idea becomes even

more complex when Kurt and Mary bury Elizabeth alive in a sarcophagus in the family crypt, using sealing wax to cut off her air supply. When Elizabeth's body disappears, Kurt is increasingly convinced she's still alive, skulking in the dark stone corridors. Suddenly, instead of Bava's one doppelgänger, there's an apparent second "resurrected" double on the loose, herself a double of another set of twins.

There are less obvious doublings as well; the corrupt Kurt is a younger reflection of his tyrannical and murderous father Count Heriberto, becoming further committed to evil as the narrative unfolds. And, in the film's climax, the villagers even burn a grotesque wooden effigy of Adele—a distorted, witch-like reflection of her true self.

Driving its horror from moody cinematography and the occasional creepy surprise, such as Black creeping back over Helen's shoulders, *The Long Hair of Death* doesn't do much to really explore the uncanny power of doppelgängers, but is at least enthusiastic in their inclusion. Rather, this 16th century tale of witchcraft and revenge's most clever use of doubling may be its own near dedication of themes of revenge, witchcraft and family curse—as well as the presence of Steele—from its many upstanding cinematic twin, *Black Sunday*. And though it doesn't quite achieve the level of horror, well...it at least hovers as confusing. ☹

BARBARA STEELE





CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT



DRIVE-INS, DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

Interstellar Underdrive
by John U. Bowen

Between the Vietnam War, the anti-right movement, the drug scene, and the sexual revolution, the '60s left a huge imprint on Western pop culture, so it's kind of odd that horror cinema went largely untouched by all the upheaval. Of course, there were a few genuine milestones in a decade that kicked off with *Psycho* and wound down with Rosemary's Baby and *Night of the Living Dead*, seasoned liberally with acceptably loud fare from Hammer, but given the staggering number of classics lurking on the horizon in the '70s, one could be forgiven for thinking of the '60s as a little duck decade for genre film.

Well, that's again. *Special* works one level and far beyond, but if your taste runs to benign basement horror — and if you're reading this column, chances are you're uncharitably fond of the stuff — an endorsement of *Interstellar Underdrive* is the farthest corner of the acid decade. The *Horror of Party* (sic) of *Focus* (waste-spaced are critics!) The *Green Stone* (shrinking, electrically charged space critics!) and *Andalusia* (British kays — hey, that happened!) link here to movies but a few. And should you dive deep enough into that steaming pile... Long suffering. Pander the delights of *Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster* (1955) will be yours.

So how does a route, hideously disfigured American astronaut wind up baffling Martians and rescuing deluded dreamers on the beaches of beautiful sunny Puerto Rico? Well, it goes something like this: nuclear warlike, so Mary has left the red planet devoid of women, now her body-ard is a punch Princess Marquon (Pamela Hendall, who lends a cheerful & *Nature* exuberance to Earth with her derivative postmodernist edict: Dr. Nedra Lou Gollif and a crew of poorly armed field scientists in hopes of finding some quality breeding stock. Of this sounds the loudest ad-sender to the post of *Shirley Maeder*



Women — released two years later — that's because it is.)

Unfortunately the interplanetary pointing probe encounters a rocket from Earth heading in the opposite direction (so films, so less — sorry!) and, leaving attack, shoots it down. Both spacecrafts make landfall just outside Ben Juan and start proceeds to get not offed in spectacularly violent fashion. The rocket's sole occupant (Robert Belli) is Colonel Frank Saunders (that's right, COLONEL FREASH! SAUNDERS), an embold who winds up horribly scarred and microcomputer-brain-de merged from the space nicker. He spends the remainder of his screen time lurching around jaw agape, brightening the locals and breaking still until his murder. Dr. Adam Strick Gannon, former of network TV *Brunkley*, *Poltergeist* and *Return of the Living Dead* fame, arrives and log-marches him into the trap to save the moderns here.

Oh, and there is indeed a space monster — a big, butt-ugly, be-bee-bee. *Interdrive* — that the Martians keep locked up in their ship, but he doesn't get loose until the final five minutes when the moderns unleash him to do battle with Saunders. And what of the other trailer monstrosity? Well, apparently that's a reference to *Seu-*

dors, what with his being a crucible of science-gone-mad although as Frankenstein movie-drops go, you'll doubtless apply the justification as pretty damn blurry.

Yes, if I think all this would be adequate to fill out a 70-minute movie, but apparently not. There's a good seven or eight minutes of padding here, consisting mostly of military hardware stock footage and low-angle sequences as JK cruises down highways by motorcycle, the latter with musical accompaniment by no-hit wonders The Poets and the Dream Castles.

In a world that made sense, the flopping might come across as an advertisement to avoid this film. Here in the Basement, however, it's nothing less than a glowing recommendation. *Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster* may not quite rank alongside equally experimental lars like *Zeit*, *Kiddush* or *The Dark Claw*, but it provoked enough derisive guffaw to warrant immortalizing here. In fact, I must applaud the usually well-known AMC for bringing it into my life with a late-night broadcast last spring. (AMC has long drawn me so far its tendency to show heavily censored versions of great films. Spoofed with all the F-bombs excised for your protection? What's lacking, travesty.)

So whether you're a devotee of the entertainingly mad-as-hell, or just a James Keeney complaint (hey, they're not there!) get the hell out of my basement and into the nearest drive-in to go uplinking for this one. It may be the most underrated 70-minute you'll experience this month. **D**





SPILT LIP

Sam Castello and
various
contributors

CRIMINAL MINDS: THE BAD SIDE #1

Paul Dabbs and
Jean-François
Ducharme

THE BURNING FACTORY #1

Steve Niles and
Emanuel Wroble
Elliott

WYTHORN #1

Scott Seaton and Jack
Maga

DOOM #1

Joshua Simmons and
Jorge Corona
Jorge

HOLLYWOOD THRESHOLD #1 OF 2

Robert Rodriguez, Joe Renshaw
and David L. Renshaw
Rodriguez

BLOOD IN FOUR COLOURS

by PETER CARREVELD

Spilt Lip is one of the more ambitious horror projects to emerge in the last decade: a serialized, anthology web-comic – that's level! The brainchild of writer (and occasional Rue Morgue contributor) Sam Castello, the site launched back in 2006 and to-date has resulted in 37 horror stories written by Castello and drawn by a number of artists.

"One of the things that is most exciting about comics is that they have the lowest barrier to entry of any popular medium," he says. "No one can just go out and make a feature film or TV show. With comics, all you need is some paper, ink and – give or take – the ability to draw. With comics' ease of entry and its acceptance of self-publishing, it seemed that if I wasn't finding the kind of horror comics I wanted to read, I should try to make them. And so I did."

The site went on hiatus in 2012 but was re-launched this October, with new pages posted every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Spilt Lip's new "season" debuts with "Victims" by Castello and artist Steven Perkins, about a man, Adam, whose village is linked to a traumatic childhood experience which he cannot recall. His memory comes to the fore, however, when he spots a familiar face in a crowd. Soon, we learn about the drastic and horrific measures his father took after the pair were abandoned by Adam's mother.

Stark, gritty and unflinching, "Victims" typifies the style of stories found in Spilt Lip: psychological, mind-benders that mine the depths of the human condition and rarely have simple resolutions. It was an approach that Castello opted for when he realized back in the early 2000s that too many modern horror comics were still filled with traditional horror tropes.

"Comics have always leaned very heavily on classic horror archetypes," he says. "Going back as far as the EC fests and other pre-code books, up through Creepy and Eerie, and into the modern age, lots of horror comics featured vampires and werewolves, man-made creatures, witches, etc.

Those tropes have their place, and great works of horror have been created using them, but they can also be a crutch. When you decide to write a vampire story, you automatically slot your story into a certain, well-established tradition that comes with a set of rules and expectations. To me, knowing the rules and expectations of a story at the outset makes it less scary. After all, if I know roughly what's coming, what surprise is there?"

This is not to say that Spilt Lip completely eschews supernatural stories. Horror fans will still find plenty of dark folk tales, mythology and ghosts mixed in with real-world stalking, murder and cannibalism.

"It's horror of ideas and moods, horror that draws on history and relationships," says Castello. "I try to write comics for people who enjoy speculative fiction, who are open to darker themes and ideas. Staying away from horror tropes allows people to look beyond the horror designation and decide whether the stories themselves are interesting to them."

Assisting Castello is a

wide array of talented artists from all over the world, including Finland, Turkey and Brazil. Past artists also include Kyle Strahm (Spenick), John Divers (Dark English), Anthony Poratto (Glopped/Poison), Sam Malkinson (Deadweight), TJ Krach (Amy Drexel Mystery), Ian Lauria (And Then Emily Was Gone) and David Hitchcock (Springfest Jack). Castello's criteria are simple: match the right artist with

the individual story's tone.

"Since comics is a visual medium, the art must be in sync with the goals of the story in order to create a successful comic," he explains. "I look for artists with interesting, unusual styles, people whose work conveys something similar to what



Victims: Sam Castello's serialized web comic features traditional/horror

the story I want them to draw is about. If they are already horror fans, all the better, but first and foremost, I look for solid technique, unique style, and the ability to tell a great story."

Castello currently has over five months worth of material ready to go, with another four currently in production, giving readers plenty of opportunity to sample his work.

"I want Spilt Lip to present new kinds of horror stories, to break new ground in the genre and point a way forward," he says. "Whether I've done that or not is up to the readers and the critics, of course, but it's my intent."

Visit spiltlipcomic.com to read for yourself, and get info on how to purchase print and e-copies.

FOLLOW PETER ON TWITTER @PCARREVELD



Castello | Perkins

The followup to the excellent *Golden* mini-series sees Declan Thomas keeping his sub-zero body temperature somewhat under control, and using the ability to spot and cure people's insanity by banishing the other-dimensional creatures that are the cause. And while Marble Jack, the previous installment's psychotic, may be gone, a new threat promises to cause more trouble for Declan: Savel, a terrifying figure with a thirst for fingers and railing humors. If that description sounds garzo, it's nothing compared to the grotesque imagery concocted by Jason Ferryman. These of you worried that the artist wouldn't be able to match the coarseness of the first series have nothing to fear. Scenes of Savel gleefully harvesting digits from unsuspecting humans and wringing bodies for milk will undoubtedly earn a place of honour in your nightmares.

Fredrick Allan is a retired monster hunter, content to teach courses about creatures of the local college instead of chasing things that go bump in the night. His family, however, has other plans. His son Geoff and daughter Wilma are actively practicing witchcraft and capturing demons, while his estranged wife, Deloris, is pumping her own mysterious, possibly sinister, agenda. Steve Niles effectively sets up the premise of *The October Faction* in the first issue, introducing the characters and their motivations at a nice pace, with just enough exposition to keep us guessing in which direction the story will head. Damien Worin's painted artwork is subdued, more focused on building atmosphere than highlighting action. For the most part it works, though the dark colour palette does have a tendency to blend into each other, making it somewhat difficult to see exactly what is happening on the page. Despite that, it's an intriguing and promising debut.

The crux of Scott Snyder's *Witcher* is that, to date, what humans have considered to be "witches" are in fact only the disciples of something far more powerful and evil. That said, we get only a hint of this primordial force in the debut issue, with connections to incident from and human sacrifice. The bulk of the story is told from the point of view of

Seller, a young mefit girl who has survived a deadly encounter with the "witchcraft" that claimed the life of her bully tormentor. Seller did not emerge unscathed, however, and she's haunted by the experience despite efforts by her parents to give her a normal life. Disabling in many parts, *Witcher* is snatching from start to finish, aided immensely by artist Jack, who can make even a normal classroom setting creepy. That's no mean feat in a book that also features humans being decimated by trees. There's a nice editorial by Snyder, which details how long the project has been gestating, and his passion shows in every page of this issue. He's lost some hits and misses over the last few years, but this one is poised to be a career highlight.

The Family Lullaby is all that stands between the normal world and the supernatural horrors that would destroy it. Unfortunately, Raleigh and Evelyn Lullaby: the heads of the family are struck down during their brief case, leaving children Zoe and Joseph to face an attack by the Belok - warrior zombies - alone. With Goreau, Jacob Somers wastes no time plunging the reader into the world of the Lullabys, which can be disorienting but nonetheless creates a strong sense of intimacy and

agency. Likewise, Jorge Goreau's art takes a bit of getting used to, with many of his characters displaying visual characteristics that border on caricature - though this does have its advantages when dealing with the more monstrous characters. But by the end of the issue you'll be so caught up in the tale that you've totally bought into the world, even two bad visuals alike.

Michael is a young, unknown actor in Hollywood who's just caught his big break playing superhero Captain Liberty in the big-budget *League of Defenders* movie. Unfortunately, Mike's good luck takes a brown turn when a zombie outbreak strikes the film's script resulting from a zombie movie, he must fight for his life and prevent some powerful celebrities from getting their brains sucked. While not exactly breaking new ground when it comes to either its zombie or Hollywood parlay, *Hollywood: Zombie Apocalypse* manages to work because it's genuinely funny with some nice digs at a wide range of celebrity culture, from Justin Bieber to *The Walking Dead*. Some of the jokes may be obvious, but Ralph Tedesco and Joe Russo are clearly having fun with the material and it translates well to the page with some effective one-liners and sight gags. David Lorenzo Reyna does a good job with actors' likenesses and the overall zombie carnage, with plenty of blood and guts mixed in with the laughs.



NINTH CIRCLE

BOOKS

A COMPANION TO THE HORROR FILM

Barry M. Benschaff, ed.
 Wiley-Blackwell

With Hilla, Barry M. Benschaff, Mark Jancovich, Peter Hutchings, James Kendrick, Isabel C. Pineda, Xavier Mendik, Joan Hawkins — the average genre fan may not be familiar with these names, but they're some of the most important writers in horror film studies. And they're just some of the scholars on hand to discuss key concepts, themes, ideas and titles throughout the 600 large-format pages in *A Companion to the Horror Film*.

Essays in Part I deal with important approaches (philosophy, psychoanalysis, gender, sexuality and social allegory) and contexts (production, distribution and censorship). These writings establish firm ground for understanding what horror is and how its effects and meanings are achieved. Of special note are essays on "Horror and Psychoanalysis" by Chris Dineen and "The Horror Film as Social Allegory" by Christopher Sharrett.

Part II, *The Form of Horror*, contains any of the best papers in the book, certain to be influential and much-quoted. Robert Spadeo's on "Horror Film Atmosphere and Narrative" is a brave attempt to define a concept commonly taken for granted. The third and longest part examines the History of the (Western) Horror Film, with separate essays devoted to decade-by-decade overview and re-evaluation. "International Horror in the 1970s," by Peter Hutchings, deserves to be singled out for its wide perspective and fresh insights, although most of its points in this section also tend to offer new angles.

Selected International Horror Cinema (including Italian, Japanese and South Korean) offer a global perspective, including an especially rich

and thorough overview on "Spanish Horror Cinema" by Ian Olney. Finally, part five, *Selected Archetypes, Hybrids, and Crossovers*, includes a stand-out essay on Karl Huxsoll's *The Devil* and another one titled "Trash/Gut Horror."

Surprisingly, in a book of this size there are only a few dunks. Jay McInerney's defense of the silly *Juicy Girl* Puller because, apparently, it "mobilizes its dystopian elements to critique a cultural ideology that advocates rigid conceptions of human identity," said Caroline Joan E. Pierce's "Flash/Visual Horror," which deals loudly with two Steven Spielberg films, neither of which are horror (*Schindler's List* and *Minority*).

These ducks aside, *A Companion to the Horror Film* is a winner: big, clever and helpful. What's there not to like? Perhaps the price (about \$160) but, then again, if you can't get this as a birthday present, there are always libraries. And no library should be without it.

DELAN GOLUBKOVIC

NYCTOPHOBIA

Christopher Fowler
 Solaris

Christopher Fowler is better known for his thrillers and crime novels than as an author of traditional horror. He's best known for his *Royal and May* mysteries (coinciding the Peculiar Crimes Unit), and he has the authority of having written lines for the world's greatest detectives in the form of a Sherlock Holmes story for BBC Radio. The author has demonstrated a keen interest in the strata of stories, putting things together: the goats and the girls — which is not to imply that he's at all a dry, black-and-white writer of absolutes. In fact, when his attention does turn to horror, it's often to bring in the gray and sneaky, the uneasy and nurtured, the exceptions to the rules and the errors in the machinery.

Taking all this into account, the darkness of *Nyctophobia* begins in its structure. It's architecture, specifically. Hyperion House, a lonely and beautiful estate in the Spanish countryside, has the

seeds for horror laid in its foundations. You see, the house is built in such a way that half of it is bathed in perpetual sunlight, where the other half is always dark.

The dim half is also locked up when Caffie, a recently unemployed architect, her wife non-chest husband Mikeo and her young step-daughter Roberta come across the place, looking for a new base of operations while Mikeo travels. Caffie is initially captivated by the house, its address and its beauty, and begins to explore and write about it. It's when the symmetry of the house, and the structure of it — easily clear demarcations between light and dark, locked and open — begin to break down that things start to go very wrong.

It's from this place of textual slippage that *Nyctophobia* becomes truly frightening. The novel is, above all else, a ghost story, but what exactly is being haunted is ever-shifting and always in question. Caffie is haunted by her own past and her fears, as profoundly as the house may be, and while she remembers the history of the increasingly hostile place and explores the physical location, she is also plunging the depths of her own darkness.

The quality of the sunlight is practically a character in and of itself, comforting or scorching. Likewise, the dark is equally compelling, complex and multi-faced. *Nyctophobia* is not a gore fest but a subtle, psychological horror, the threat of growing dread and slowly swelling menace. It is also, at it's heart, a ghost story — not the kind where blood runs from the walls and horrific apparitions go scads apart, but one that explores what it means to be haunted.

MATTHEW DINA WALSCHBOTS

IN THE COURT OF THE YELLOW KING

Guy de Maupassant
 Columbia Press

Once a neglected and overlooked book, a bell-tolled edge of the Cthulhu mythos, Robert W. Chambers' collection of stories, *The King in Yellow* has finally been rediscovered. Sure, there have been other engagements with the text, especially attempts to write sections of the madman-inspired play that sits at the core of many pieces in the book, but these came after. *The King in Yellow* served as a primary source of inspiration for the H.P. Lovecraft series. Due to Detective that Chambers' stories (in particular, the





four interconnected stories "The Yellow Sign," "The Reparer of Reputations," "The Mask" and "In The Court of The Dragon") were being mainly mined for content and adapted into various forms. The most recent of these is the anthology, *In The Court of the Yellow King*, a mixed collection that is difficult to pin down, as no small part because most of the pieces within it escape us some way with the notion of genre.



Count of the Yellow King differ the most. Some gesture towards the overwritten and over-
 wrought (which is more forgivable here than usual, as these pieces do take place in a Liver-
 draften universe), hoping for gravitas and ending up too cool and distant. But some pieces,
 such as Christine Margen's "The Viking in Yellow" are just beastly in their ferocity, or cool
 and insouciant (justly William Meikle's "Bottom in Yellow"), and these pieces find books
 Gray in the meat of the mind.

A DARKE PHANTASTIQUE
ENCOUNTERS WITH THE UNCANNY AND OTHER MAGICAL THINGS

James V. Brock, Jr.
Cupertino, Calif.

If you've been waiting for a brick-sized anthology of fresh haiku, SE, haibun and magical realism, you're in luck. The weighty *A Zenko Phantasmique* is comprised of mostly short stories, but also poems and one television screenplay – all previously unpublished, including a brief foreword by the late Roy R. Bradbury, written in the 1950s.

This solid collection includes "The Love Witch," by William F. Noyes, a witty, blackly humorous story of a woman who believes in the power of witchcraft.



THE SCHUMER GUIDE:
THE UNIVERSE OF FILM FROM
ALIEN TO ZATHOUS

Charles H. Koppelman

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

der is a common language, is *The Sci-Fi Movie Guide* makes clear. From the obvious (*Star Trek*), to the most obscure (*Clopping Milt*), to the truly unexpected (*Disasterland*) the compendium—based on 1996's *Mitchboard's Sci-Fi Experiences*—may not be stringent in its definitions—but it's a lot of fun.

1. *Journal of Management Education* 24(1): 10-11



WORTHINGTON: A CANTONMENT

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© 2004 Blackwell Publishing Ltd
Journal of Internal Medicine 255: 105–114

An opulently filmed novel involving a very old mansion, romance, and ghosts seems incredibly old-fashioned, yet *Abbot's King* is everything as well. Clifford begins out that

His brother Simon, a recovering alcoholic, has gone mad, after he receives a letter detailing his stay at Abbot's Keep, where a friend recruited him to find an ancient treasure... and the darkness attached to it. Finally, a ghost story that reminds you why the basement is so terrifying!

EIGHT MEN-101



THE QUALITY ISSUE

Source: <http://www.fishbase.org>

Yellow Diamond

There are no rusty stories about this decrepit hotel as there are vacant rooms. And just like its interior, they're dark and foreboding and impressively scary. Fit the

pages and follow the book clerk as he leads you down some of its darkest corridors, each chapter regaling you a thrilling Lovecraftian tale of a different quest, alive or undead, real or surreal.

NET CHANGE LANES



TYSON & TOLAN

James W. Thompson

1 edition (Open access)

in this debut novel, a malevolent train controlled by a public shape-shifting entity, threatens to seduce and destroy the small towns of Bowdler, Ontario. **James K. Mraz**

does a good job of establishing the town and its many characters, but most of these aren't very interesting, unfortunately. David Forester, a bisexual cop who has to confront his sexuality as well as the perils of the job, is the exception to the rule.

MARKET RESEARCH

THE AUTHOR WHO BROUGHT US *BUBBA HO-TEP* PROVES THAT HIS STORIES ARE ANYTHING BUT BY-THE-NUMBERS WITH HIS LATEST, **PRISONER 489**

DEATH SENTENCE

by ALISON LANG

"SOMETIMES I LIKE A GOOD MONSTER STORY COMING FROM THE MOUTH OF JOE R. LANSDALE. THESE WORDS ARE A BIT OF AN UNDERSTATEMENT."

Horror aficionados probably know him as the loosely prolific writer of the screenplay for *Bubba Ho-Tep*, in which an elderly Elvis (Bruce Campbell) and "JFK" (Ossie Davis) take it apart: He's in a retirement home. Or you might have caught the Lansdale-penned *Whispers of Horror* episode "Innocent Day and Off a Mountain Road" with its memorably detoured "Halloween" killer (both projects were directed by Dan Coatsworth). There there's his 2010 *Bram Stoker Award*-winning story "The Fielding Man," featuring a gaggle of endowments him and the titular creature, unleashed upon a horde of hapless people.

Of course, Lansdale isn't just known for horror; over the years he's also deftly moved from crime novels to Westerns to darkly poetic thrillers, notably his 2000 Edgar Award-winning novel *The Bottoms* (soon to be a feature film directed by Bill Pottler). Papered off genre, Lansdale's writing voice—with its wry, eccentric command of the vernacular, harvested from the deepest recesses of East Texas—is distinct. This style once again informs his newest book, *Prisoner 489*, the second in a fan-back series published by the Black Labyrinth imprint at Dark Regions Press, a psychological horror/thriller novel line written by leading genre scribes. Publisher Chris Mony reached out to Lansdale over a year ago for a contribution, as part of a Kickstarter campaign, and, as it turns out, the title tag of the request

lined up with the seeds of a story.

"I was in the mood and it sounded like fun," says Lansdale. "The request often establishes the mood, but film and other exhibitions like that need a request. This one came after being asked, but the idea of a prison found and another far beyond had been with me for awhile. I just never knew what to do with it until now."

Set on an isolated penal island, the story follows three prisoners locked with buying the bodies of executed inmates delivered via boat from the maximum-security pen across the harbor. One night, they receive the corpse of a prisoner who, according to the boatman, took an awfully long time to die. As it turns out, the execution didn't really take.

"I've always liked stories where the characters are isolated and have mostly themselves to depend on for survival," explains Lansdale. "I do think getting older gives you a more reflective view on life, and sometimes a sense of isolation, a realization of just how mental you are. I sort of tapped into that early, in my mid-20s, but it has grown with age. Not an unhappy feeling, just an awareness, realization (in which we all want, even if it's just a validation of a life well lived)."

Lansdale frequently champions the idea that good living leads to good writing, and his Facebook page, which also serves as his official advice hub for aspiring authors. Growing up in a working-class household, he didn't have the benefit of higher ed-

ucation or an MFA to help hone his craft. As a result, his writing involves—*and friends*—an experimental touch.

"I had a lot of weird jobs growing up, and it gives you a better understanding of other people, how they live their lives," asserts Lansdale. "Being an *standards* [like *Prisoner 489*'] is not a whole lot different from what I was in [jail] for seven years. It's about clearing things up and keeping them as concise."

Lansdale's own professional life is brimming with projects, as usual. Among other things, he's putting the finishing touches on a new book featuring his popular detective character Hag and Leonard (who are also big characters in a series of graphic novels from SST Publications), co-producing the *Bottoms* film and releasing a new novel, *Posseman*. Still, in spite of 2015 he admits the horror genre may take a backseat for awhile.

"I'm feeling an urge to do other stuff," he admits, but adds that his other horror led—the one that goes a little wild and yelps with delight at a good 'ol isolated pen—never leaves him.

"I like that that part of me is still there," says Lansdale. "I think it helps me write with love and enthusiasm. I like to think that the adult in there too. I don't want to be—*and can't be*—the perpetual kid, but there has to be a part of me that retains that element where it comes to making things up that you hope others want to read."





monstrous tale, "The Olsen," by Brian L. Koppert, a psycho-superstitious tale set in Alaska during the Gold Rush, "Lovecraft's Pillow," by Dee Webb, about a modern scribbler comically tam'd into an old-fashioned gent by sleeping on go pillow. Lovecraft expati on, "Dart Made of Words," by Gady Goshollow, dispatching the dire consequences of books literally coming to life, "The Case of the Four-Acre House," by Joe R. Lansdale, a haunted house-themed reader-class on doctorylling, and tales from the likes of Richard Gavin, Jonathan Thomas, Lucy A. Seydler and Nickolas Funn. The screenplay is courtesy of Greg Brag, titled "Gernius," it's an unproduced script written for *The Outer Limits* TV show about beings from another dimension and an autistic boy who may open or close the gates into our world. And it's a good one.

These selections, however, are paired beneath another 40 tales and poems at mostly middling quality, or worse: some are forgettable, some silly, some well-intended but not thought through, and some are quite preachy and syrupy. This means that this 700-plus page monster contains approximately one third of decent, readable material, and about two-thirds questionable prose. As such, it will hardly "break new ground with its take on the literature of the fantastic," as promised in the ambitious announcement, unless it happens to slip from your hands onto the ground and actually crack the sidewalk.

Proceed with caution, therefore, and don't get me started on the book's semi-amateurish design, especially the interior, where multiple fonts battle with public domain illustrations, Photoshopped images and some original artwork—the latter only in the deluxe edition.

DEAN DONAHUE

THE BOY WHO DREW MONSTERS

Keith Donohue
Prador

Horror movies in which children draw images of the terrifying things that torment them are commonplace—think *Children of the Corn*, *The Ring*, *Jawless*—but using that as the hook for a novel is a rarer thing. Keith Donohue's *The Boy Who Drew Monsters* does that as it delves into the world of a couple's struggle to cope with their disabled son and whatever is also haunting their seaside home. As the title suggests, ten-year-old Jack Peter Keenan draws monsters, but not the cute creature varieties typical of boys his age.

After nearly drowning on a family trip, the child develops a deathly fear of leaving his home, causing him to slip further into his own mind and his increasingly bizarre drawings. Seething with resentment and anger, he begins to sketch his own brand of malicious monsters that somehow begin to leap into reality. Soan, his parents, Holly and Tim Keenan, and their best friend Hank, begin to see flashes of disturbing nightmarish creatures (in particular a white, naked figure on all fours), accompanied by distant wails in the night. Growing ever more scared of her son, Holly seeks help from the Catholic Church, while her husband tries to maintain his sanity, help Jack Peter, and discover who or what the mysterious white figure is.

The Boy Who Drew Monsters is a unique coming-of-age tale that somehow manages to lead all the adults to question their sanity as Jack Peter slowly gains his. Although the plot turns aren't too difficult to figure out and it does take time to build up, great writing and strong character development make up for these shortcomings.

Readers who stick around for the full half of the book will be rewarded, as Donohue delivers the goods with a slow, suspenseful scenario and a constant reassurance that the Keenan family's honor isn't just all in their minds. Overall, *The Boy Who Drew Monsters* is a great read for any book nerd with a love of delirious psychological horror and a healthy dose of monsters thrown into the mix.

VICTORIA BROWN



LIBRARY OF THE DAMNED

WALK FOR DARK MONSTERS

My home is full of books, primarily genre ones. The bookshelves stretch from floor to ceiling and, on some, the novels are stacked two deep. Over the past few months, as my family has expanded, so has our not-so-little library, which now also includes a variety of picture books. Here is a roundup of the best monster-themed ones I've happened across so far, in case you have any creepy little children on your Christmas list this year.



ARE YOU MY BREAKFAST?
Drew Aust and Ashlie Hunsen
Monkey Mirror Press

This playful tilt on the popular *Are You My Monster?* series sees a young monster under up and go off in search of breakfast, lifting into every non-brain foods—including a basketball!—and a host of cuisines—while seeking his perfect meal. The illustrations are large, cartoonish and colorful, making this a humorous and quirky entry to bedtime for tiny tikes.



GOODNIGHT, BABY MONSTER
Lauren Lewis,
illustrated by Nigel McMillan
HarperCollins

Instead of being afraid of the things that go bump in the dark, why not take them in and say goodnight to them? After all, if there are monsters, then there must be baby monsters too, right? This one's a solid introduction to all the major horror archetypes, presented via friendly, non-threatening artwork that features the creatures in their wildest, wildest.



I'D REALLY LIKE TO EAT A CHILD
Sylvain Desrosiers, illustrated by
Quentin de Moor
Random House

Achilles is a baby cannibal who subsists on a diet of delicious humans, but what he really wants to eat is a human child. His parents try to tempt him with all sorts of other food to no avail. Of course, when he actually goes within eating distance of a kid, well, things don't go anything like Achilles planned and what could have been a scary story becomes very, very funny.



FRANKENSTEIN MAKES A SANDWICH
Adam Rex
Scholastic

Usually, for slightly older kids, it is grossly illustrated collection of short stories, poems and comics in an absolute must-have. Presenting all of the classic monsters in their most recognizable guises, as well as newer iterations such as Godzilla and Riptide, the tales focus on food (obviously), monetary problems and vices (e.g., why the Wolfman would make a terrible roommate) and the irony of getting a poorly sung story in your head for a really, really long time.

STEPHAN LEECH

FRIGHT GALLERY

CURATED BY GARY PULLIN

THIS MONTH MAN MADE MONSTERS

Thomas Kuebler painstakingly sculpts and sculpts life-sized characters that are so incredibly realistic, you can almost hear his Kravmag bust him. It even takes a bit of courage to get close enough to see if his work is indeed made by human hands. Kuebler assures us that they are, and describes his process.

"I approach sculpture the way a classical painter approaches the word painting," he raves. "It is as much about that frozen moment in time as it is about the character. Sometimes I'll create a whole environment around the character to capture that moment."

After a ten-year career in toy design and animatronics, the artist started his own business and channel his expertise into commissions and personal work without the time or budget limitations that often come with the commercial art world.

"The entertainment industry usually requires a team of people, a lot of a lot of technical expertise, and a huge nest of cash," he explains. "The short answer for me is that I really wanted to take full control of my vision. I am focused on what I do as the art rather than as commercial entertainment."

Kuebler's full-scale orders were almost always beneath their budget, so he gave up — his sculpt of Lon Chaney Jr. as the Wolfman would have truly calculating a fast way. These incredibly detailed dressing includes tailored clothing and the hair that's patiently poured into fake flesh, one strand at a time. Kuebler won't belated his tactics to just classic monsters and madmen for inspiration, either. Fortune tellers, witches, creepy blind men and even female real-life circus freaks populate his studio.

"I've recently begun chipping away at a full-bodied version of Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man," he says. "He is so inspiring to me in that of all the people against this poor guy got harassed with, he remained a dignified and sentient human being. Yet, he was killed in the world as a monster. Why? Because, fear gets people interested in the first place. Fear makes life interesting."

Kuebler's work has won multiple awards, has been exhibited in museums and galleries all over the US and in private collections, including The Rock Museum, director Guillermo del Toro's famous dwelling devoted to monster lore and horror film props.

By the way, note: "I was in an interview with *Rolling Stone* in 2017 that first brought me to the attention of Guillermo del Toro, who now owns numerous sculptures of mine, so thank you for that!"

Having just worked back to his home state of Ohio, Kuebler is currently working on a few commissions. He had to ask: Is there a place he's dying to tackle?

"Madness, the Gargoyles," he says. "I'm working on my very first one. I have started collecting some of the paraphernalia that I need to flesh her out...so to speak."

Behind many of Thomas Kuebler's creations at thomaskuebler.com





THE GORE MET

MENU: DEAD FLESH DELICACIES

Zombies have completely and thoroughly invaded the mainstream, beginning with the success of *Resident Evil* and *28 Days Later*, back in 2002. They grew in significant numbers in 2004 with *Shaun of the Dead* and *Shaun of the Dead*, and marched through the rest of the decade in a slew of hit films and *Resident Evil* sequels. But it certainly wasn't always this way, which is what makes Ken Wiederhorn's under-appreciated *Shock Waves* (1977) — premiering on Blu-ray from Blue Underground — an essential for the core.

A desolate, claustrophobic cabin by John Carando encounters blizzards, weather conditions before hitting a ghost ship in the dark and running around off the shore of a seemingly deserted island. In exploring the island, the passengers and crew discover an abandoned hotel and its lone occupant, a former G.I. officer (played by Peter Cushing) responsible for the squad of undead Nazi soldiers rising from their victory tomb to stalk and kill the stranded tourists.

Shock Waves is very much a throwback to '60s horror film. Wiederhorn builds his scares through suspense, not special effects. The lack of gore actually makes the movie in this regard. This is a zombie film made at a time when zombie films were not in vogue — it predates *George of the Jungle* (1978) — and the filmmaker wrangled an admirable amount of tension out of interesting camera work and creepy musical cues. There are fantastic moments when these elements gel, such as when the boat hits the derelict ship in the dark and the undead Nazis first venture from their bunker tomb. The small-scale shots to the claustrophobic atmosphere of the film, and the disregard for horror conventions (for example, characters are killed off in full daylight) make this film unique.

Blue Underground has ported over the extras from the DVD, including commentary with director/writer Wiederhorn, makeup designer Alan Ormsby and filmmaker Fred Olen Ray, and has



added new interviews with producer/producer-captain Ruben Thoms, composer Richard Elms and star Brooke Adams.

On the opposite end of the corpse pore spectrum — where much more is made more — is the quintessential underground film Jörg Buttgast's *Nekromantik* (1988), also premiering on Blu-ray. I vividly recall looking through a mail-order bootleg catalogue back in 1992 and coming across a listing for it. Even though this catalogue was a typical cut-and-paste Xerox job, the iconic poster art, the tag line ("The return of the living dead") and the ludicrous description kept off the page. I didn't order the tape, but when I saw it was to

Loewy, who comes up acceptant spores and steals body parts so he can deliver them to his domineering girlfriend, Betty (Bertha M.). She's delighted when he brings home a corpse and they waste away their time looking at the corpses. Home life is also until Rob is fired and Betty leaves with

the corpse. His resulting anguish leads him to exceptionally graphic murder and suicide.

There's an otherworldly quality to *Nekromantik*, as grim and squallid as it is. The sensuality of it is enhanced by a score that is eclectic, organic, hypnotic, sometimes disorienting and often eerily beautiful. There's also the shiny corpse with a cool leg penis, a partial desecration by shovel and the most jaw-dropping climax in cinematic history!

Nekromantik was released on VHS in North America by Film World magazine in 1990, and on DVD by Barris Entertainment in 2008 (Barris also put out Buttgast's *Nekromantik 2* and *Schmerz* [1993], and had plans to release *Der Aufwacher* before going out of business.) The new Dalt Epic release will lack that market. The disc contains two versions of the film, one from the original 35mm negatives and a "Director's Cut" edition from a 35mm print. Also new to disc is a Q&A with Buttgast of *The American Cinema* in 2013 and his previously unreleased 15-minute short *Not Love* (1993).

Long live (and love) the dead!



play into cult film and video fables that October, along with *Der Todessing* (1992) and *Nekromantik 2* (1997). I bought a VIP pass and cosplayed the dogs.

I was gathering with anticipation the night of the screening. We watched a projected VHS tape, which just made it seem all the more like it was positively giddy by the time. There was a fire that went up to both the grounds of the artwork and the bootlegger hype! *Der Aufwacher* was the next night. In his introduction, the programmer announced that the movie shop that had provided the tapes had been robbed. Sadly, I found out just last year that this was just a joke. I thought I was getting away with something...

Nekromantik is about the webbed Rob (Doktor)

AUDIO DROME

★★★★★ **WALLY** ★★★★★ **BRANDON** ★★★ **BOB** ★★ **BOB** ★ **BOB** ★ **BOB** ★ **BOB**

REVIEWS BY MARK H. KAMAU, CHRIS HARRIS, BY ANDREW VON LIPSTON, LEE LEE, NICKI, GEORGE PICKENS, SEAN PLUMMER, AND CLARA TOLSON



CRUMB

Pro Doreggio

(1999)

Pera Doreggio is one of Italy's most prolific film composers, not to mention director Ennio De Palma's go-to collaborator on such famous films as *Body Heat* and *Obsessed to Kill*. With *Crumb* (1999), Doreggio shows his willingness to tackle cheap and sleazy genre fare along with top budget serious thrillers and dramas, always approaching his work with the class and grace of a true maestro. *Crumb* goes to no exception in this role, delivering a subtle, wrenching female soul with beautiful strings and wry sax accompaniment on "Mettere a Lament," while "The MMM Murders" evokes 80s horror synth sounds alongside tense violin solos to create an atmosphere for elevated terror that one might typically expect from a B-movie horror score. Worth mentioning is a haunting vocal melody theme—sung in traditional Hebrew—which

appears as a leitmotif throughout the score, tying to the backstory of the lead character: a few are criminal played by none other than Klaus Kinski. Overall, Doreggio delivers everything *Crumb* fans expect, while also serving as a great, memorable soundtrack to an otherwise humble horror flick from the 80s. **★★★★★** GP



THE RAID 2

Joseph Trapane, Arja Prayogi and Fajar Naskahani

(2011)

One even looked a little about the 2011 Indonesian martial arts cult hit *The Raid*. Redemption, is that its US theatrical release actually featured a completely redone score by Joseph Trapane and Linkin Park's Mike Shinoda for the family-friendly and blood-soaked sequel, original *Raid* composers Arja Prayogi and Fajar Naskahani team up with Trapane to deliver a bold new vision for action

film scores, and one of the most impactful soundtracks of the year. Mostly electronic but also orchestral, *The Raid 2*'s lengthy score is based mostly around dark drama (think Hero Zemeckis' music for *Raiders*) and overpowering tension, reflecting less of the film's mind-blowing fight sequences and more of the dread of their violent conclusions. It's released on CD and various colour vinyl collections, but no matter what format you get, *The Raid 2* is one you'll need on a stormy night when you're getting ready for the fight of your life. **★★★★★** MAM



CLUSTER BASTER

Total Terror

Paras: RD + Phoenix/Bluescreen

As more artists tag into the newly popular genre of two horror soundtracks, a major factor in determining their effectiveness isn't whether the instrumentation is accurate—in this case, a sequencer-oriented sleasher score—but whether the composer(s) can internalize the concept and build something that flows, shocks and claws with a satisfying dramatic finale. Cluster Baster's hearty embracement of drum sequences and heavy keyboards is evident from the title track (and dirty dance cuts such as "Vaseline Shuffin'"), but its most impressive components lie in cues where impact and theme variations fuse into something beyond catchy. There's some great impact ("Dereged"), wailing synth chords ("He Never Sleeps") and plenty of fat bass lines in the score, and longer cues allow for extended motifs. But by which embracing the seductively limited sounds of the slicked sleasher score, the micro-ambiance of *Spel Terror* is likely to only be relished by connoisseurs, if not hardcore fans. **★★★★** MAM



TETRALOGOSI

Tetralogosi

(2009)

Italiani Sara Pansadori and Corrado Pansadori upset all expectations of what garb music is capable of with this bizarre, delightful debut album. As the playfully-named Tetralogosi ("tetra" is Italian for "quartet" or "quorum", we assume you know "logos"), the duo can do organ, drum machines and harpsichord to create up songs that are creepy and weird but still catchy. How weird? Tetralogosi's beauty reaches its zenith on "Tetra-terro", which sounds like a collaboration between "Planet Clash" and B-12's and Unleash Lyrical Pansadori's phrase to Edgar Allan Poe on "The Golden Bug" and has a nose of lines reminiscent of both Rembrandt's *The Lute Player* ("Sleazy Day") and Depeche Mode's *Dave Nelson* ("The Milky Way"). As is the music, imagine the initial nightmarish of composers Fabio Pizzi and Rocco Ottolenghi by way of Gary Numan and Lindy and you're about 60-80% of the way there. Consider this strange enough to put a smile on the face of the most pedantic before. **★★★★** GP



HORROR VACUI

Reform of the Empire

Horror Vacui: Sean Derry Productions

The film's "horror vacui" comes from the art world, meaning "the filling of the entire surface of a space with de-

DEAN MACDONIA

Shadow to Shadow

Dean Macdonia's Frankenstein

Sci-Fi Music

Whereas the comic 1921 Frankenstein was originally released with its black and white footage tinted green ("the color of fear"), Dean Macdonia opts for a broader palette with his musical version encompassing spoken word, folk rock and a composition that would sound at home over the credits of a Universal classic—all within the first three tracks. The voice is clear and strong, the guitar work melodic yet occasionally heavy (as on "Pursuing From The Moon"), and the lyrics set the epic tale to verse with finesse. Though not as conceptually as eclectic as anything on *Supernatural* or even *Duffy's* "Once More With Feeling" episode, the songs are more memorable than those in *Def Dead: The Musical* or even *Wicked*. Like the mad doctor's creation, *Shadow to Shadow* is a product of intense labor and a great reward: crying out to be given life, cradled with a full cast. Frankenstein, your audience awaits. (Q) up a copy at deanmacdonia.com | **★★★★** GP



WITH SUPERSTITION THE DISTORTED MASCARE PUTS A CANDY COATING ON THE SPIRITUAL, THE MYTHOLOGICAL AND THE PAINFULLY PERSONAL.



A SWEET DARKNESS

by SHAN PLUMMER

THEY — MOSTLY — DRESS IN BLACK AND ARE VENERATED AS CANADA'S BEST KNOWN GOTH BAND. EVEN THOUGH

their music is actually an amalgam of pop, metal and electronics, as well as, yes, the spookier forms of music collectively (and inadequately) termed "Goth." And yet, the members of The Distorted Mascare — singer Chibi, guitarist M. Falcoze and Rainbow, drummer Rhin, bassist Helle Moxer and key-boardist Owen — are far from spooky in-person.

"I wonder if we disappoint people sometimes, that we're not dark and brooding," admits Chibi during an in-person interview with the band in their hometown of Toronto.

"Being brooding, we wouldn't be ourselves," adds Rainbow. "And a big part of the band is just being ourselves and promoting that sort of vibe amongst our audience."

That vibe, which is loads like a cavelled Halloween treat in that you'll find the really good stuff just under the candy coating — is obviously working, as the latest (sixth) studio album from the group can attest. Called *Superstition* (Metropolis Records), it was partly crowd-funded via a PledgeMusic campaign that raised over 300 percent of its original goal. It was recorded at both Falcoze and Rainbow's home studios in Toronto, with mixing done in Vancouver by Dave "Rive" Ogilvie (Skinny Puppy, Johnny Hollow, Marilyn Manson), who has worked on every TBC record since 2007's *Making Allto Strangers*.

The music on the album ranges from ominous ("Superstition," "The Other Side") to upbeat ("Domino," "Unholy"), while showcasing a heavier Birthday Massacre pop/metal/indie band. It's a cinematic soundscape that sets up alternately melodic and harsh guitars, drums and synths against Chibi's sweetly sweet vocals, although the singer isn't afraid to unleash a death metal

growl on occasion, despite having had surgery for vocal polyps two years ago. ("It's a great sound, but it's very damaging on the voice," she says.)

"We like to use the aspects of horror and creep to play against and offset some of the sweeter, prettier aspects that we have in our music," says Rainbow. "We've always been fascinated by that dynamic of beauty and horror and putting them together and having them accost each other."

"Both musically and visually," adds Chibi.

Superstition was also partly inspired by the band's interest in both mythology (the Greek Fates are referenced in "Divide," for instance) and spirituality. Rainbow sees both forces as being more involved in today's culture than in years past, albeit in a superficial way that he and his bandmates find fascinating.

"When we say this album is a little more spiritual or mythological, it's not one particular spirituality that we're promoting," he says. "It's more just the subject in general, and I think it's something that people in our circles and our generation haven't really thought about. There's definitely a renewed interest in those types of things, and you can see it in a lot of fashion that you see in stores, a lot of iconography on shirts. People are rediscovering it but almost in this strange, commercial, trendy way which we found interesting as well."

Thoughts of spirituality — and what may lie beyond this mortal coil — also provoked some of the lyrics.

"I've had some dark things, some loss in the past year," reveals Chibi, "and that sort of got the wheels in my head turning in ways that hadn't happened before. [But] it's good to have something to focus on if you're brooding. I could sit here and brood or I could be productive, take these things and translate them into something that could be therapeutic for us in a way. Even get through a creepy afternoon of brooding."

After a sudden realization, she pauses and laughs.

"I've said 'brooding' three times in the last 30 seconds!"



PLAY DEAD

NOW PLAYING > THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON 2 THE FIVE WITN. THE VANISHING OF ETHER CARTER



THE WALKING DEAD:
SEASON 2

PS1, Kant 300, PG/Mac, iTunes
Dell/Dell/Compaq

Tulsi Sawai continues her writing streak with *The Rolling Door*. Season 2, the follow-up to 2012's award-winning interactive adventure. Picking up sixteen months after the events of the first outing, *Season 2* puts the player in the shoes of Clementine, the girl you were introduced with protecting in Season 1. Now alone, she has to lead by "herself" in a world populated with "hostiles" and equally dangerous bands of bandits and scavengers. In time, she encounters a new group and joins them in their escape from a hellish town called

There's been some minor tweaking to the mysticism, but for the better, with the result being quicker reaction times and more fluid controls between puzzle-solving and the occasional slambang with associates living and undead. There's plenty of money in gameplay. The real meat of the game, though – to win the case on the first outing – is the dialogue you make during your fellow crowlers. Your responses to their dialogue shapes the group dynamic and affects your relationships with your comrades. There will still be some instances of minor graphics lag, but not enough to take gamers out of the mood.

With these 760 games now under their belt, Teltale has demonstrated that there's still plenty of life left in this franchise. If the next installments show even half as much care and craftsmanship as this previous one, then this may just be the shot in the arm that the video game world needs to keep going.

FOCUS: MANAGEMENT



THE EVIL WITHIN

PO, P50, P54, Xerox 340, Rockwell
California

DRAG MIKAMI — the man who brought us survival horror back in 1996 with the Resident Evil franchise — is back at it with *The Evil Within*.

GRIMES He's clearly trying to replicate the formula that worked so well in *Resident Evil* with a mystery but slowly unfolding while you face horrible monsters and shifting reality. Borrowing elements from the title that made his famous makes sense, but the influence is only skin deep, and as a result, *The Evil Within* is more about their souls.

You play as Detective Sebastian Castellano, who has been called in to investigate a mysterious disturbance at Kilman City's Mental Hospital, along with his partners Joseph and Julie. Sebastian is knocked unconscious when his team is attacked by a robed figure, and he awakens in a Silent-Hill-esque reality that's infused with hostile emotions called the *Insured*, and

architecture that weeps and bleeds without warning. This surreal environment and its terrifying inhabitants appear to be under the control of a mysterious and powerful master, Rusk, who will test Sebastian's sanity as well as his will to survive.

The perennial criticism of the current state of horror survival gaming is that the games are either too action-oriented or too cerebral, which is one aspect *The Dark* affirms as well. Ammo and resources are tight, so as survival-horror games, but that doesn't mean you won't face wave after wave of the undead, as well as some extremely vicious. Fortunately, you do have the option to hide and sneak, which is helpful for picking off larger enemies and avoiding shoddy traps with engaging guile intelligence. The discovery bonus is a high, though, this tweaked version of *Maniac* can



features seemingly endless hallways and doors that are likely to suddenly turn into walls without warning. While these atmospheric elements are commendable, the dialogue is weak and the characters two-dimensional.

* Full transaction will



KEYWORDS: adolescent; alcohol; binge drinking; drinking water

KEYWORD: BBA, NOT DURING COMPLAINT PERIOD, NOC THREE-WAY IN HAND, LOCKING IN FIRM

KEYWORD: BBA, NOT DURING COMPLAINT PERIOD, NOC THREE-WAY IN HAND, LOCKING IN FIRM



THE VANISHING OF ETHAN CARTER

PC

The Observatory

There's a fine line between the real and the surreal. No one knows this more than Paul Prospero, the gruff paranormal investigator and protagonist of the first-person weird fiction adventure *The Vanishing of Ethan Carter* (out now, from The Astronauts). Using his psychic abilities to solve crime, he must navigate forests, abandoned buildings, and condemned mine shafts.

It all begins when Prospero receives some very peculiar and disturbing fan mail from a young man named Ethan Carter and is compelled to travel to the area known as Red Creek Valley, where the Carter family resides, and uncover just what kind of darkness haunts the sleepy little countryside. Once there, Paul must use all of his unique skills to piece together the mystery of just what befell Ethan and his family.

From the beginning you're given no clear direction and no specific goals outside of finding Ethan. As you explore the game world you'll stumble upon clues related to events that may or may not have happened in the area. These clues can be as subtle as a broken rope or as overt as a dead body with a cut-throat dagger stuck in it. Once you've gathered enough clues, Paul can use his powers to reveal the events that place and just what involvement Ethan had in them.



While not a pure horror game in the traditional sense, *Vanishing* draws heavily from sources such as *NieR*, *Proton*, *The X-Files* and the work of Lovecraft. The breath-taking scenery, beautifully haunting soundtrack, and Prospero's occasional monologue about life and death work together to create an atmosphere that is less about scares and more about the uneasy calm that comes after all the actual horror

has finished. There are still fights to be fought, though, in particular during a section of the game in which the player must wander through a dark maze looking for the combination to an ancient, locked tomb, all the while being hunted by the cursed soul that guards it.

With the sheer number of survival horror games available, *The Vanishing of Ethan Carter* is refreshing for any horror fan looking for a change of pace and a good mystery.

MIKE BRANDALL



REMARKS: SPUNKY STORY, GENUINE HAUNTS, SUPERB MUSIC, INSPIRING PLOT
VERDICT: SOMETIMES GLOWING WITHOUT CLEAN HAUNTS, BREATHTAKING & TERRIFYING

CLASSIC CUT

ONIBABA (A.K.A. DEMON HAG)

KANETO SHINDO ■ JAPAN ■ 1964

A towering presence in Japanese cinema as a writer, director and pioneer of independent filmmaking, Kaneto Shindo's career traversed no less than seven decades. In the words of American film critic Chuck Stephens, "striving neither to heights and delicious pulp-action lows." Born in 1912, Shindo made his debut as a writer in 1940 and would go on to pen over two hundred scripts for the likes of Kenji Mizoguchi, Sotatsu Suzuki and Kinji Fukasaku, but also for the 1970s "pink violence" trilogy. Also the half-brother of both the big and small screen adventures of blind swordsman Zentoshi.

As if writing didn't keep him busy enough, Shindo delivered another 48 films as a director in the 60 years between his 1961 debut *Story of a Beloved Wife* and his final film *Postcard* in 2011 — a year before his death at the more than venerable age of 100. Both his first and final films were autobiographical stories.

Onibaba (1964), his only horror film along with 1968's *Kurozoku*, finds its origin in a Buddhist parable, transformed by Shindo into a clammy tale of erotic horror. Two women in the war-torn Japan of the 14th century live amid an expansive field of grass high enough to hide a human figure. As they wait for the return from the battlefield of the man who is soon to die and husband



to the after, they survive by luring stray warriors into the thicket, where they kill them and sell their armor and belongings to a local buyer (seller of stolen goods). The bodies are disposed of in a well — a glistening clink being hidden amid the tall grass.

When a neighbor returns from the war after deserting his fellow troops, he brings news that the man they're waiting for has died, and promptly sets out to avenge the widow. She is all too eager to respond, much to her companion's disgust, as by herself, the older woman can't continue killing and scavenging. She offers her own body instead but is rebuffed. She then resorts to more extreme measures: wearing the demon mask she lifted off a disfigured general, she appears to a hideous demon during the younger woman's nightly copulations in an attempt to end the affair and keep her accomplice for herself. She soon descen-

ders, however, that she can no longer enjoy it, and that it was not a cure for the general's disfigurement, but its cause.

Shot in stark monochrome, *Onibaba* is a kaleidoscope of inexpressible and strongly suggestive imagery: the gaping hole filled with corpses, the women's continuously naked bodies, and the iconic honeyeater demon mask.

Thanks to the earlier international discovery of Shindo's 1960 semi-documentary feature *The Naked Island*, *Onibaba* made an impact abroad early on. While a 1964 New York Times review called *Onibaba* "a masterpiece of grotesque and lurid images," the film's legacy has thoroughly disavowed such accusations of insensitivity. In fact, it could be argued that *Onibaba* had a stronger impact outside its homeland. When contacted for this piece, a number of prominent Japanese horror directors, who shall remain nameless, confessed to not having seen the film! (Though it's hard to suppress thoughts of Shindo's film at seeing the deep, dark wells that form such essential components of Hideo Nakata's *Ring* and Shinya Tsukamoto's *Brainstorm*.) By contrast, German director Wilhelm Friedke viewed it with a lot of interest: "I must see *Onibaba* some time he contacted

for *Entertainment Weekly* in 2005, saying that the scenes of the naked demon chasing the preened young woman through the back grass "one drive shivers up your spine like a cold towel on the back of your neck."

Indeed, the strongest signs of *Onibaba*'s influence can be found in American rural horror. It is not hard to see where the crop fields in *Children of the Corn* or even M. Night Shyamalan's *Signs* found the root of their menace. More importantly, *Onibaba*'s portrayal of a backwoods frenzy for whom murder is just a part of the daily grind can be seen to prefigure everything from *Leatherface* & Co. in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and Jupiter's clan of *The Hills Have Eyes* to the *Friday the 13th* films. The Devil's Agency: The 50-year-old "Demon Hag" is godmother to some truly illustrious, and homebred, slasher.

TOM MEE